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MARGHERITA OF SAVOIA



MARGHERITA DI SAVOIA
Portrait by Gardigiani, in the Quirinale, at Rome

MARGHERITA OF SAVOIA

LATE QUEEN MOTHER OF ITALY

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"ELEONORA DUSE: THE STORY OF HER LIFE,"

"BENITO MUSSOLINI—THE MAN "

WITH FRONTISPIECE
AND 21 OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO THE MEMORY OF
HER MAJESTY MARGHERITA OF SAVOIA

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THE historical data in this book are taken from *Storia d' Italia*, by L. Cappelletti, and *Storia di Casa Savoia*, by Dr. F. di Angeli. The personal data have been given me by various people, who at some time have known, more or less intimately, H.M. the late Queen Mother.

ROME—PARIS,
August, 1929.

MARGHERITA OF SAVOIA

CHAPTER I

THE FAIRY PRINCESS

MANY years ago, to be exact, in 1851, in the city of Turin, a Princess was born. Those were troublous times in Italy, so there was no ringing of bells, no public rejoicing announced the birth of a future Queen. Only in the House of Savoia was the blonde baby, first child of Ferdinando of Savoia and Elizabeth of Bavaria, greeted as a harbinger of better times, a prognostication of future joy.

The little fairy Princess, she who was destined to become United Italy's first Queen, was given the name of Margherita, which means Pearl.

CHAPTER II

THE HOUSE OF SAVOIA

IN order to understand perfectly the story of the little Fairy Princess one must know something of the history of the House of Savoy, which offers a particular interest to all who love Italy, not only because the first Queen was by birth and marriage of that House, but because of the private and public virtues of the greater part of the princes as well as the character of their home and foreign ardour and sagacity, distinguished as it has been in all ages throughout Europe.

The origin and early doings of the Savoyans are somewhat shadowy and shrouded in mystery. But they are the oldest of the reigning dynasties in Europe, and though there is little authentic data, traces of them are to be found as early as 900.

Some historians claim that they came from German stock, while others insist, in order to make them out as purely Italian, that they are descended from one of most unlucky memory, Berengario II, Marquis of Ivrea, later king of the first unimportant kingdom in Italy. His reign was far from glorious, beginning and ending as it did in a few years. Berengario was a traitor and perhaps the murderer of his benefactor and sovereign. He was a very wicked man and every known treachery took place during his occupancy of the throne.

Luigi Cibrario, an illustrious historian of the House

of Savoia, believes that the real head of the family was Ottone Guilielmo, Count and Duke of Upper Borgogna, son of Adalberto and nephew of the ill-fated Berengario II. Ottone would thus have been the father of Umberto Biancamano, undoubtedly the ancestor of the Savoians.

Then again, others treat the dynasty as a feudal family of Moreana, a country between Farantasia, in France and Savoia, in the Valley of the Arc, from which the Pass of Moncenisio led to Italy. If this is true, then from their very origin the Savoians were practically predestined, as natural custodians of the frontiers, to turn their eyes towards Italy. In Moreana, Savoia, they had their regular habitations, and it is there that one finds the most ancient tombs of the family, as well as the first authentic knowledge of the dynasty.

Regardless of what their origin may be, it is certain that the past one hundred years has brought much French and German, as well as other foreign blood into the House, as the princes of Savoia were, and still are, forced to turn to other countries for their wives.

In the early history of Italy many national princes tried from time to time to dominate the Peninsula : Can Grandi della Scala, Roberto of Naples, Luchino Visconti, and others ; yet none of them ever felt the urge to attempt the difficult and saintly task of uniting the country. That was left for Vittorio Emanuele in 1861.

For eight centuries the princes of Savoia, sentinel-like, in one sense or another, have watched over the destiny of their country. All of them have been distinguished by a strong patriotism, individual abnegation and an intense love of family. As a Royal

family they offer the greatest number of voluntary abdications of power and spontaneous renunciation of glory with every sacrifice of personal ambition. And never has a Savoian been known to abdicate for other than what he believed to be for the peace and betterment of the Patria.

Above the throne, they have one and all placed the consciousness of their grave responsibilities before God and man. And as they have been honest and sincere with governments and people, so have they been in all private family relationships. And never have any of them been known to spend prodigiously the State funds in private magnificence. Unlike many other reigning houses they have never seemed to feel the need of accumulating vast fortunes through exorbitant taxation and while impoverishing their subjects to invest their ill-gotten gains in foreign banks. Their only patrimony has been the love of their people, a patrimony that wars and changes in conditions have never taken from them.

In the long story of the Counts, Dukes, and Kings of Savoia, without doubt one can find mention of several who did not prove themselves great in the eyes of the world, those who were incapable and unhappy in their power, those in whom there was no visible trace of the family characteristics. But of none of them can it be said (even in the most remote feudal times) that they were violent, cruel, or tyrannic.

It would be unnecessary to the present story to go into the details of the reigns of the various Savoians who ruled over one part or another of Italy from 900 up to the present generation, but as one always wants to know something of a heroine's grandfather, we will begin with Carlo Alberto.



CARLO ALBERTO
Margherita's grandfather

Carlo Alberto, of Savoia, grandfather of Margherita, was King of Piemonte, in 1848. Piemonte was one of the many insignificant kingdoms which along with miserable duchies and independent states composed an un-united Italy.

Carlo Alberto was the son of Carlo Emanuele and Maria Cristina, of Saxony. He, Carlo Emanuele, had very liberal ideas and was the idol of all his soldiers. A story is told of how during a battle (1796) he stood impassive in the midst of the flying enemy bullets. When fearful for his life one of his generals advised him at least to cover the Order of the Annunciata so that it would not serve as a target for the enemy, and asked him to have respect for that if he did not have it for his own body, he replied proudly : " No ! Never has a Prince of Savoia covered this Order before the enemy ! Never has a Prince of Savoia shown fear or cowardice before his soldiers ! Back of this Order stands a Royal Prince, whose cry, while there is breath in his body, is : *Avanti Savoia !* "

The war over he retired to private life filled with revolutionary ideas, obstinately renouncing every princely right. His palace became the meeting-place of all lovers of political intrigues. Then in order to keep in the movement he volunteered as a simple soldier in the National Guard, doing sentinel work as any ordinary soldier in those posts, where only a short time before, at his passing, princely homage had been rendered him.

Carlo Alberto was thus abandoned to the care of his mother, a woman of ingenuity and eccentric liberal ideas. One day she was seen walking under the porticoes at Turin, dressed in the latest republican mode and carrying her son in her arms. Often, dressed

as a woman of the people, she carried her husband's lunch in a basket to the guard house where he was on duty. With such a mother, not to give thought to the father, it is not surprising that from his earliest years Carlo Alberto showed sentiments of independence and liberty that no power was ever able to change or destroy in him, and which eventually urged him to attempt the redemption of Italy.

Carlo Emanuele was finally banished from Piemonte and forced by the French Government to live near Paris, where he died in 1800.

The infancy and youth of Carlo Alberto was very sad. He was literally flung here and there, without family, without a country, and often without financial resources. His education, if one can call it such, was received here, there, and everywhere, according to their means, and the humours of his vagabond mother, who not knowing, or perhaps not caring what happened to her son, at times forced him to live on black bread and water, and to share his bed with a schoolmate.

Things and events made of him a shy, silent, irresolute young man, unable to take advantage of some of the propitious offers that eventually came to him. By order of Napoleon he served, under the name of Count de Carignano, as 2nd Lieutenant in a French regiment, where he had no chance to distinguish himself. Had it not been for Tallyrand, who became interested in him in 1814, the present dynasty might never have existed.

Order being re-established in Piemonte Carlo Alberto, still known as Count de Carignano, passed from regimental life to that of a Court, a Court that seemed to go backwards rather more than forwards, in

surroundings where everything wounded his generous soul. He was made a Colonel, Commander of the Artillery, because as a Royal Prince, even though one who was not well thought of, he was obliged to have an exalted position. Immediately he took command of the artillery he began to demonstrate his innate desire for reform. Soon his palace became the meeting-place of all the brilliant youth with, so-called, new ideas. Often they communicated their ideas to Carlo Alberto, talked of their great hopes for a war with Austria. Not only did he willingly listen to his friends' frank words, but he himself usually agreed with them sufficiently to raise their hopes and ambitions to have him as a leader. Tall, slender, beautiful of person, with an expressive, animated face, he was regarded sympathetically by many of the important men of his day.

He was the heir-presumptive, Carlo Felice then King having only one son, a mere child. By the conservative Royalists he was looked upon with suspicion as being too liberal for the country's good.

In 1817, Carlo Alberto married Maria Teresa, daughter of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. This alliance he accepted before he had seen his bride as he was not taken to Florence until a short time before the date set for the wedding. They became immediately the best of friends, and very soon after the presentation they were found in animated conversation, talking heatedly of Italy, and of a way to get rid of the Austrians. Carlo Alberto brandished his sword and exclaimed to a friend present: "She is delicious! And best of all she is Italian like you, like me!"

Upon the death of his uncle, Carlo Felice, in 1831,

Carlo Alberto became King of Sardegnna. He had two sons, Vittorio Emanuele, Duke of Savoia, and Ferdinando, Duke of Genoa.

The new King of Sardegnna, and incidentally of Piemonte, ascending the throne as he did immediately after the French Revolution of 1830, knew very well that not only had he to fear Austria, but that the eyes of all the despots of Europe were turned suspiciously towards him.

His every move was difficult, yet he never wavered in his work of reform, nor was there ever one incident to prove to the people that he was not thinking more of the good of his subjects than of himself. He who had been rather shy and uncertain became fearless and decided. His reign was one of personal abnegation. The following episode demonstrates the great heart of the King :

In 1835 a terrible epidemic of cholera broke out in Piemonte. "On this occasion," a contemporary writes, "Carlo Alberto stayed in the midst of his people, visiting the hospitals daily, mingling with the sick and dying. And he did this while other Italian princes fled the country, to save themselves from the dread disease, to places less menaced."

The independence and unity of Italy was Dante's dream. And it was the tormented aspiration of numerous great Italian souls for many centuries, yet it was only during the period preceding Carlo Alberto that it began to take form and to become a conscious desire of the people.

Carlo Alberto, like his predecessors, was a warrior who led his troops in battle with the same fatherly love that he gave to all his subjects in the rare intervals

of peace. His great love for his country was proven when after the terrible battle of Novara, 1849, which it was hoped would free Italy from Austrian invasion and rule, he called a council of war, and of his own free will, he abdicated in favour of his son Vittorio Emanuele, Duke of Savoia.

For some time before this the unhappy monarch had felt that the sacrifice of himself was necessary to save the State. When he definitely learned that he was no longer desired as a ruler he decided finally to make the sacrifice that was forced upon him by the defeat.

Surrounded by his generals, orderlies, and his two sons, his voice trembling with an emotion which he tried in vain to hide, he said slowly: "For eighteen years in these parts I have tried to do everything possible for the good of my people. And it is sad for me to see that my every hope has failed, not only for myself but for my country. I have not been able to die on the battlefields as I know that I should have done, as I wished to do. It is impossible for us to continue the war, even if my generals so desired. And now it seems to me that my person is the only obstacle between a complete accord with the enemy, therefore, from this moment I give up all rights to the crown in favour of my son Vittorio Emanuele, Duke of Savoia, in the hope that your new King will obtain more honourable pacts than I could have done, and thereby secure an advantageous peace for our country." Indicating the young Duke of Savoia he continued: "There is your King. He has been a worthy soldier, may he be an equally worthy ruler." He greeted all of his assistant officers affectionately, consoling them with hopes of better days to come. After dismissing

them he remained alone with his two sons, Vittorio Emanuele and Ferdinando.

A few hours later the self-dethroned King wrote two letters, one to the Prince of Carignano, the other to Count de Castagnato. Then accompanied by one servant, he passed under the name of Count Barge, the Austrian headquarters. Eventually he arrived at Nice, and from there went to Antibes, then Tolosa, in Spain. It was at Tolosa that he signed the Abdication Act. At long last he reached Oporto, in Portugal, where worn out physically and morally, he died four months later, July 28th, 1849. His last thoughts, as his last words, were of his country.

Some there are who call him a traitor, while others believe him to have been the real instigator of liberty and independence in Italy. Historians differ in their opinions, yet the incontestable facts remain that he was the father of a great movement, that he fought at the head of his troops, as kings and princes did in those bygone days, and that he died in voluntary exile alone, practically in misery, he, who had lived in regal splendour.

Vittorio Emanuele was twenty-nine years old when he came to power and swore to consecrate his life to vindicate the grand defeat that had forced his father to abandon the throne. The young Prince was gifted with all the qualities necessary to bring about a complete regeneration of Italy. His first public act demonstrated his unusual character and rare intuition. He was obliged to meet the triumphant Marshal Radezky at Vignale, a humble village not far from Novara, to establish the conditions of the armistice after the cruel defeat which had cost his father his

crown. No one heard the colloquy, but much later it was learned that the old Austrian warrior took that occasion to push the young King into revoking the Statute by which Carlo Alberto had given the populace the benefit of a Constitutional Government which was to animate them to reconquer absolute power. Had Vittorio Emanuele accepted this impossible price Austria would have offered favourable peace terms. But Vittorio Emanuele replied proudly that rather than ruin his country he would continue to fight so long as there were a sword and a soldier left ; to accept the proposed offer would be a villainous act. However, he was finally forced to sign a peace treaty with Austria under painful conditions. But despite them the red, white, and green flag was not lowered, rather was it spread wider in the wind, a sure emblem of peace and hope for the land of the free. Thus the constitution was saved.

Shortly before the battle of Novara, Ferdinando of Savoia, Duke of Genova, younger brother of Vittorio Emanuele, became engaged to Elizabeth of Saxony. The marriage was agreeable to both families, and was to have taken place at once. But Ferdinando, companion of his father and brother in the war of independence, was occupied more with affairs of State than with love. His name was very dear to all Italians, even to those in the farthest parts of the country. The proof of that was shown when he was elected as King of Sicily.

The proud Sicilians, weary of the rigorous rule of the Bourbons, desired a king, and an Italian king. Believing that they could find in the House of Savoia a man capable of resisting the ever-increasing power of Austria, on July 11th, 1848, Prince Ferdinando

of Savoia, Duke of Genova, was elected by Parliament King of Sicily. This great honour he refused, believing that he could serve his country better by remaining in the northern Armies.

Maria Elizabeth of Saxony, the young fiancée of Ferdinando, was a daughter of John Nepomuceno, King of Saxony, a good and talented sovereign who abolished feudal laws and capital punishment in his State, and who, under the pseudonym of Filetete, translated the *Divine Comedy* in German.

Prince Ferdinando was a handsome young man, kind, intelligent, and highly cultured. He was a good and extremely interesting conversationalist in several languages. It seems that the Princess Maria Elizabeth loved him passionately, and she was very proud of him. So when word came to her that her Royal fiancé, instead of meeting her at the altar was beside his father and brother facing the enemy on the battlefields, instead of bemoaning her fate as an ordinary girl might have done, she felt an increased pride in him, almost a reverence for his conduct and valour. She wrote to him continually and enthusiastically, and in one letter told him that even the Emperor of Austria had spoken with praise and admiration of his exceptional military valour and courage.

And so for two years the beautiful German princess, as princesses must do, remained faithful to the promised spouse, to him who knew so well how to remain calm in adversity or triumph, jealous of the honour of his army, as he was of his House, and ready to shed his blood for his country.

In April 1850, as the modest Count de Bairo, Ferdinando of Savoia arrived at Dresden, and a short time after was married to his beloved princess. With

his bride he returned to Turin where they settled in the monumental Chiabrese Palace, of which his brother Vittorio Emanuele had given him the entire right wing.

In the left wing of the same Palace, Vittorio Emanuele lived with his Queen, Maria Adelaide of Austria, who was his cousin and whom he had married when they were both very young. They had five children : Princess Clothilde, Umberto, Prince of Piemonte ; Arnedeo, Duke of Aosto ; Oddone, Prince of Monferrato, and the Princess Maria Pia.

A very happily united family, they awaited with joy the arrival of the German princess, she who born of another race was in time to show herself absolutely one of them, and to be the mother of Italy's future Queen.

The past seventy-five years have brought mighty changes in every country, dynasties have fallen, but the House of Savoia still remains to us, and as a dynasty is still most highly esteemed.

CHAPTER III

MADAME MARGUERITE

THE cousins, King Vittorio Emanuele's children, were all small, being from five to ten years old, when the little blonde princess was born to Ferdinando of Savoia and Elizabeth of Saxony, in the right wing of the Chiabrese Palace, and their rejoicing knew no bounds. The boys were not really thrilled by the idea of a baby girl, for girls were delicate and could not romp much with boys, but the little princesses were highly pleased with the promise of holding a baby cousin in their arms.

Margherita was sleeping peacefully beside her mother in the massive bed when the five children were taken to see her. They glanced curiously at the funny little head, the puckered mouth, the tiny clenched hands. They talked in subdued whispers, all of them hoping that the slight noise might make her open her eyes. Five young minds concentrated on a single helpless object had the desired result, cousin Margherita obedient to their wishes opened her eyes. What colour were her eyes? They asked curiously. Blue? That was a nice colour—they would love her because she had blue eyes. Quite content with this discovery they went back to their own quarters to talk about the strange new cousin, to plan for her future games and rompings with them.

All, and more than they in their childish ardour

planned, was carried out. Their adoration for cousin Margherita increased always with the years, and so long as they all lived there was deep love and perfect understanding among them.

It has always been the custom in Italy for the father to name the first child, so using his privilege, Ferdinando, besides Margherita, which is the name of a saint of the House of Savoia, called his child Maria Teresa Giovanna. The baptism of the baby princess was celebrated with pomp and splendour. The maternal grandfather, King John Nepomuceno, was godfather; the paternal grandmother, Maria Teresa, godmother. Cavour, d'Azeglio, Uamarhora, Durando, Morozzo della Rocca, and Nicolas di Robeliant were among the grand dignitaries at the ceremony; several of whom lived to see Margherita Queen of Italy.

The King Vittorio Emanuele II was very devoted to his younger brother, in whose clear vision and decided opinions on all questions of State he believed implicitly, and it was in order to have him close at hand for constant discussion of political questions that made him offer the right wing of his own palace to Ferdinando and his young bride.

Born as she was of parents whose culture and rare moral qualities set them distinctly apart from the average couple, even in an age of intellectuality, it is easy to understand that Margherita's inherited characteristics would be of a superior order; being as they were the result of two noble races united by a sincere, ardent affection in heroic times and under social conditions that were not always blessed by the most precious of human happinesses, love in marriage.

The young parents' pride and joy in the baby girl

knew no bounds, and so tender were they, so jealous of her tears as well as her smiles, that they were never willing to confide her to the care of a paid nurse. Unlike most royal fathers and mothers, they kept the small Margherita with them almost constantly, tending to her slightest needs, waiting impatiently for the first sign of an awakening intelligence, listening to her baby attempts at speech, wondering, as all parents do, what the future might have in store for this child, the fruit of their love, flesh of their flesh.

Prince Ferdinando adored the baby and often, as any bourgeois father might have done, he got up during the night to assure himself that she was properly covered and sleeping soundly. Cold nights or hot nights it was quite the same. Margherita was his last thought before going to sleep, the thought that wakened him during the silent watches, and early in the mornings, when often he would take her from her little bed to the big one to play with her before rising.

The revolution in its course over Europe had not yet touched the Russian Empire. Even the Polish populace, ever ready to profit by an occasion to recover its independence, had remained silent and subdued before the sovereign rule of the rigid Master of St. Petersburg. But soon, one by one complications arose which brought about the great war in the Crimea.

Then for Italy a most important event happened : Piemonte rose with the Occidental Powers against Russia. Count Cavour, one of Italy's greatest statesmen of all time, then President of the Senate, saw in this alliance the beginning of the regeneration of the

Peninsula, and when Sir James Hudson, British Minister at Turin, asked for a troop of Piedmontese guards to be sent to the Crimea, the request was quickly complied with. According to usage, Prince Ferdinando, being the King's brother, should have commanded the expedition. But Prince Ferdinando was already a sick man, and his physicians forbade him to make the attempt which he desired above all things.

He was miserably unhappy then, and had it not been for the joy his little daughter afforded him, he perhaps would have at least made the almost impossible effort to help in the preparations for the expedition.

On January 12th, 1855, Maria Teresa, Margherita's grandmother, died, and the child, not yet four years old, wore her first mourning, not quite understandingly, for she could not see why they had put such a dear old lady under the ground, nor what the unpleasant ceremony had to do with black crêpe. Then, only ten days later Maria Adelaide, the adored aunt, was also mysteriously taken away.

On February 10th, while his King and brother reviewed the Piemonte troops before their departure for the Crimea, while the drums rumbled and the military music played outside the Palace, Ferdinando got up trembling from his bed to look out the window with sad eyes, to look for the last time at the soldiers that a rebellious illness prevented him from leading on the battlefield, encouraging them to final victory.

Ill as he was, he managed to hold his little daughter in his arms, hoping thus to have the sight of their soldiers engraved on her mind. His voice trembling from weakness, he told her in words that she could

understand, that those brave men marching below them were their soldiers, and that always she must love them, for they were ready to fight for the honour of their country, love them as brothers and never fail to respect their rights as men and fellow-citizens.

Sometime before his untimely end, he told his physicians that if going to the Crimea with his soldiers was dangerous to his health, not going would probably cause his death from mental agony and regret. Ferdinando longed to live because of his adored family, and because he wanted to be at the head of the brave Piemonte troops on the battlefields of the Crimea.

The evening after the reviewing of the troops Ferdinando of Savoia called the Princess Elizabeth, the adored companion, to his bedside, and talked to her long and tenderly of their children, Margherita and Tomaso, begging her to watch over them with every care, educating them to be good to everyone, generous towards the poor, kind with servants, and faithful to the Church. Then taking a small prayer book from under his pillow he handed it to her. "Keep this," he said, "my little book of devotions, as a precious souvenir for Margherita, whom I ardently desire to grow up a good pious woman, and a constant friend to all those who suffer."

Those were the last words of Ferdinando of Savoia, Duke of Genova.

Margherita was still a mere baby in years when her father died. His being the third death in the Royal family within a month, something of the gravity of her loss seemed to obsess her, and often when alone she cried for the kind father, whom she had been told she could never see again. And her greatest

consolation in those early days of childish grief was the little prayer book which Ferdinando had left to her. When it was first given to her she could not read it, but as she learned the devotions she found the mystery and beauty enthralling, and all through her life it remained one of her most cherished possessions.

After the death of the Duke of Genova, the education of her children became the assiduous care of the sorrowing Duchess. Her task was not a difficult one as the princely children were singularly docile, intelligent and affectionately devoted to their mother. At first they studied because they knew it pleased her to have them know their lessons, and later they studied with a zealous frenzy because they themselves were interested in the tasks set before them.

Elizabeth of Saxony was a beautiful blonde as a girl, and she retained her beauty all through life. Gentle and amiable when young, she eventually became a severe woman of inflexible social etiquette. She did not care at all for the pomp, formality and ostentation of Court life, but when obliged to take part in it she lived up to its rules. Her greatest wish was to have her children learn to know life in its austere and simple reality, to have them interested in the needs of the people, in order to be able to help intelligently all those who deserved help.

Margherita loved her mother dearly and was very devoted to her little brother, while Tomaso adored his sister Margot, as he called her, and at all times he showered her with tender attentions.

It was a daily occurrence and a pleasant, proud sight for the good Turinese to see the little Princess Margherita and Prince Tomaso walking with their mother, the Duchess, under the porticoes of the Po,

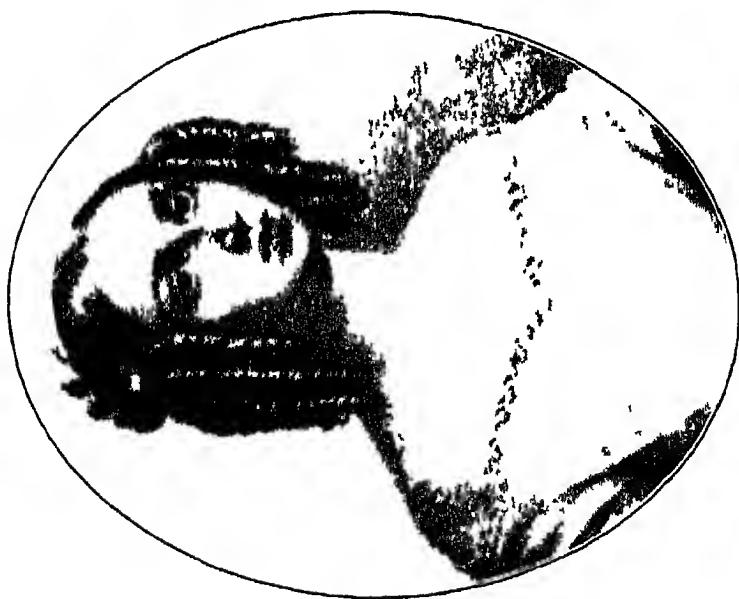
or in the avenues of the Piazza d'Armi. The children soon became very popular, for at a tender age they began to follow the paternal example of visiting the poor and infirm, providing for the miserable and unhappy, and responding with gracious smiles to all who greeted them on the streets.

The Turinese had always been most devoted to the House of Savoia, and they as citizens were exceedingly proud of the Princess Margherita, who, they said, did not have an equal in the whole world.

Margherita's first friends, and her only really intimate ones for many years, were Natalia and Elena Morozzo della Rocca, daughters of Italy's famous general of the Royal Army, and of the Countess Irene, born Verasis de Castiglione, a lady-in-waiting to Queen Maria Adelaide. These children called the little princess, according to Court etiquette, "MADAME MARGUERITE." And never would they have dared to present themselves to Her Royal Highness with their hats on, or with the right hand gloved. But, the Court regulations thus satisfied, they received from the small and gracious "Madame Marguerite" affectionate attention and consideration.

Their favourite games were hide-and-seek in the apartments or the gardens of the Chiabrese Palace, and the making of caramels. Prince Tomaso very often played with them, but only when he could find nothing more manly to occupy his time.

With the gravity that can be given to the making of candy when one is five or so, the two Royal children and their little friends would go through the intricate preparations of making a sugary syrup, adding drop by drop the preferred flavouring. When the big copper kettle was filled the four of them would gather



ELIZABETH OF SAXONY



FERDINANDO OF SAVOIA

around the maid, who at the fire in the wide hearth superintended the cooking of the precious mixture. If it took longer than usual to boil, Tomaso became impatient, and began poking the fire.

"Tomaso! You silly boy!" Margherita would exclaim, pretending to be angry. "You'll spoil everything if you're not careful!" Shrugging her small shoulders: "But, of course, boys never know anything about cooking!"

When at last the time came to pour the delicious liquid on the marble slab, armed with knives they would take turns in making the regular squares, rounding the corners, and then dusting all with powdered sugar. That done, the little brother would go in search of an occupation more worthy of his sex. Whether he found it or not one never knew, for he always managed to time his return so as to be able to assist in the eating of the delicate sweets, more than once to the point of becoming ill from them.

Certainly the prayer book that Ferdinando left as a precious and sacred souvenir to his beloved daughter had much to do with the forming of Margherita's character, and helped to inspire in her a pure and vital faith that can only spring from a love of God and of humanity.

By nature kind and gentle, "Madame Marguerite" began very early to interest herself in the unfortunate and downtrodden of which Turin was well filled, and they in turn turned to her as to a sincere little friend who was always ready to ask help and succour for them. She listened with rare intelligence to all the sad stories told her. A pitiful sight on the street always brought tears to her eyes, and made her long to give

away everything she had. Anything pathetic would make her clutch her governess's arm and in a trembling voice whisper: "I want to help that poor person—find out who he is."

Affectionate, frank, and loyal as a child, she was greatly beloved by high and low alike. And as the child so was the woman.

It was not long before Margherita began to manifest a real love for study, and while still very small, not yet ten years old, she spoke French, the language of the Court, the Savoian dialect, and Italian. The Duchess of Genova, her mother, believed that it was necessary for both her children to speak practically all modern languages, and from the beginning of their education she employed good and cultured foreigners as governesses and tutors. None of Margherita's teachers ever had other than praise for their pupil's rare loyalty, sincerity, and elevated thoughts and sentiments. Those who had the honour of instructing her found a real pleasure in teaching so unusual a creature, so unusual in the harmony of her physical and moral qualities.

And in between her studies, "Madame Marguerite" with the two young Countesses Morocco della Rocca, was busy in her little *salon* which for an ordinary child would have been a nursery, preparing supplies, those supplies that children can prepare, for already the very air was impregnated with the shadows of the coming events of 1859. Often, at twilight, when it was too dark to continue the work those little hands did so willingly, so proudly, and before the candles were lighted, the three children, moved by a common impulse, would kneel and pray to God to save Italy

and the brave soldiers who must fight for their salvation.

And the Royal child, with a strange intuition was preparing her small self for the life of a Royal Princess whose very soul belonged to the country of her birth.

CHAPTER IV

MARGHERITA, THE GIRL

THE morning of April 22nd, 1859, an enormous crowd waited in awe in the Church of San Giovanni, at Turin. Before the high altar a warrior knelt in silent prayer. He was Vittorio Emanuele II.

The same day he published a proclamation, strong and generous, in which he announced to the Army the beginning of a war with Austria, a war that had long been desired and waited for.

Austria attacked Piemonte. France came to Italy's aid. Province after province came into the war, for nowhere in the Peninsula was there a person who did not hate Austria. Garibaldi, with his red-shirts came forward to help in the conflict, how successfully he helped the history of that time tells in detail. The King was at the head of his troops, the bravest, the most daring of all the soldiers.

The kingdoms, duchies, and petty states, all but Venice and Rome, had accepted the independence and unity of Italy, and so it came about that on October 26th, in the neighbourhood of Teano, Vittorio Emanuele offered his right hand to Garibaldi, who in turn saluted the monarch as King of a united Italy.

The plebescite of Sicily and of Naples sanctioned the unity of the Patria knowing that the union was not

integral, owing to Rome and Venice being out of it. Yet in March 1861, the first Italian Parliament called at Turin, proclaimed that the Kingdom of Italy was founded, with twenty-two million inhabitants.

. And thus was Dante's dream realised.

While history was being made, the Princess Margherita was studying diligently, learning from her Viennese governess, the Baroness Arbesser, a charming and highly cultured woman, the rights and duties demanded by her exalted position and rank. Sometimes Margherita rebelled at the strictness of the discipline imposed on her, and would throw a book on the table in a most unroyal manner, even though she knew that she would be punished for the burst of rage, as well as leaving lessons for a more amusing work. Then even bandage-making became a refuge—and, too, that work saved her from being punished for neglecting study, as bandages were greatly needed for the thousands of wounded which were brought to the hospitals each day.

With gentle understanding of her sensitive nature, the Baroness Arbesser explained to Margherita that not only must she give herself to others, but that she must do it with simplicity, with serenity, with joyful abandon. That at all times she must overcome any physical illness when she was expected at a public ceremony. That when visiting in a hospital ward she must know how to smile in order to make the sufferers smile; even though her heart might be touched with pity and her eyes full of tears, she must to a certain extent hide her real feelings. That all her charm and intelligence must be at the disposal of every just cause of her House and of her country.

To all this the young Princess paid great attention, how great was proven by the beauty of her long and active life.

Margherita of Savoia was barely six years old when she began to visit the children's hospitals, orphan asylums, poor houses, and the schools of Turin. To the sick children she carried inexpensive toys, which she always selected herself; to the poor some little luxury which they could not have had otherwise; and the schools received, as well as her patronage, some sort of a prize. She was frequently bored by long and tiresome dramatic performances given in the schools in her honour. But at that tender age she had already learned to stifle a yawn, and when the performance was over to say with politeness and grace, the pleasure it had given her to be among children of her own age.

Her life at that time, and in fact all during her girlhood, was very modest, as both Vittorio Emanuele and the Duchess of Genova, were too generous hearted to tolerate luxury in their respective families when great sums of money were needed to provide for the public needs, war expeditions, and the poor population, who were never abandoned by the inexhaustible charity of the House of Savoia.

All the photographs to be found of Margherita of Savoia from her earliest years up to her marriage show her modestly dressed, without jewellery of any kind, the glorious blonde hair brushed back from the pure brow, singularly expressive of candour and dignity, her only ornaments. The sweetness of her smile, the expression in the clear blue eyes revealed the simple, affectionate disposition of a poetic harmonious nature inclined to fantastic dreams, foreseeing,

perhaps unconsciously, an uncommon destiny, the mysterious presentiment of a cruel suffering blended in just measure with great love.

Whatever her presentiments, certainly as she grew to womanhood there was a shadow of melancholy in her eyes that gave a spiritual vagueness to the lovely face. Yet her life was outwardly calm, almost solitary, secluded from all mundane society.

The Princess Elizabeth, Duchess of Genova, took great care of, and had great care taken of her every movement, with rare intuition divining, prognosticating the heights to which her daughter might be destined. Equal attention was given to her spiritual and moral education. And from the rigid rules, from the preferences, even the reverence with which she saw her mother surround her, a certain indefinable something grew in Margherita, which showed that within herself she felt the Queen. However, this feeling did not prevent her from remaining a very natural and affable girl.

One day when her governess reprimanded her for having been too courteous to an elderly friend of her mother's, telling her that she should not have taken the elder woman's hand, that for her, a Royal Princess, it would have been sufficient to bow, Margherita replied: "All right, I will obey you now because—well, because I suppose I must. But when I'm grown up, I will give my hand to whomever I think worthy. And I know that I shall find many worthy people!"

At ten she was believed to have attained the age of discretion, and so her mother gave her a weekly allowance for her charities. This modest sum Margherita spent with prodigal bounty the first day.

Once when the Baroness Arbesser, thinking to make the generous child wiser in the ways of giving, advised her to go a little slow with her expenditure, she exclaimed indignantly :

"What's the use of being born a Princess if one cannot do all the good one wants to ! My money is mine to do with as I wish, so what difference does it make if I spend it in one day or seven ? " And so it was that Margherita of Savoy became known as the good fairy or Lady Bountiful of Turin, who gave her time, her thoughts, her very soul generously, unconditionally to the distressed and needy.

She exhaled love and pity, and in the ever ready smile bestowed upon the sick and afflicted in whatsoever form, there was a healing comprehension that was unforgettable, and left a sense of sunshine in the hearts of the sufferers, a consolation, a redemption.

A woman may often be genial and kind to her intimates and inferiors, yet retain a strict adherence to social etiquette. The Duchess of Genova was such a woman, more perhaps in order to set her daughter a good example than for herself. Among her ideas of Court etiquette was the uncomfortable one that a royal person should receive standing. She made this a rule when she arrived in Italy, and she never changed it. One evening, at a ball given at the Chiabrese Palace, a certain well-known woman appeared in a very low cut gown, much too low for the Duchess's taste or ideas of propriety. She called quite audibly to a lady-in-waiting : " Go fetch the Countess M——'s scarf, she has unfortunately forgotten to put on her corsage ! " - .

It is due, no doubt, to this early training that

Margherita's ideas of etiquette were always very strict, and the clothes of her ladies-in-waiting most discreetly décolleté. And that never so long as she lived did she permit even those dearest to her to make the slightest move that was not suggested by her.

The Noble Signorina Emma Regis, daughter of General Regis, a contemporary of Garibaldi, was among the privileged young girls of Turin who saw the young princess very frequently, and who like all her old friends remained on intimate terms with her until the end. Signorina Regis tells how when Margherita was between fifteen and sixteen she delighted in taking her morning walks dressed in black velvet trimmed with chinchilla. These black velvet gowns were different from her other clothes in that they always had trains. At that time it was fashionable for women to wear trains, but it was unusual to see a girl in her teens wearing them, yet even at that tender age Margherita of Savoia considered herself a personality, and therefore entitled to the distinction of older women in her toilette. With the warm days she sometimes appeared in green, but never in any other colour.

Chinchilla was her favourite fur, in fact it was the only fur she considered worthy of royalty. Later, when she was free to spend money as she pleased, and when she made presents to her ladies-in-waiting, she nearly always gave them chinchilla coats, thus showing her respect for their superiority in offering them her preferred fur, as well as her affection in making the gift.

While Margherita was growing up a new trouble was brewing. With the annexation of the Southern

Provinces of Italy there still remained two great problems unsolved before the national unity could be considered complete: Venice and Rome. And it demanded all the able diplomacy of Vittorio Emanuele and Cavour in order to find a solution to these problems.

But before these grave questions could be resolved and settled, Cavour became ill and died in a few days, on June 16th, 1861. His death deprived Italy and King Vittorio Emanuele of their best friend and wisest adviser. No one more than Camillo Cavour could ever be so sincerely regretted and universally mourned by both his own and foreign countries.

History writers of that time did not doubt England's sympathetic interest in Italy's fight for independence; but if the diary and correspondence of Queen Victoria reveal her personal hostility towards the liberal inspirations of Italy, the uncrowned Queen of Genius, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, left in her poems of the Congress, and in her letters as well, admirable proof of her enthusiasm and sympathy for Italy in perhaps the most interesting period of her history. She wrote to her sister-in-law from Florence, on June 17th, 1861:

"I can hardly command my pen to write the name of Cavour; that great soul who meditated upon and worked continually for Italy has flown to an even more divine country. Certainly if my tears or my blood could have saved him he would not have died. I still feel that I do not quite understand the greatness of this loss. A hundred of us might better have gone than this one man. There is, I believe, a slight hope that a solution of the difficulties may have been prepared between him and the Emperor, and that events will eventually come about as he had planned. May God bless Italy."

Napoleon III was profoundly saddened by the death of Cavour, intuitively perceiving King Vittorio Emanuele's suffering over Italy's loss and the difficulties that would come of it. As an expression of consolation to the King, and in order to give him a proof of France's friendly interest, he announced his intention of officially recognising the Kingdom of Italy—"in the moment in which Your Majesty has lost the man who more than any other has contributed to the regeneration of the country."

A short time after that a French Minister was sent to Turin, where several months before England had sent one. This example was followed promptly by Portugal, Denmark, and Sweden. Russia and Prussia also sent Ministers to Turin, while the King of Italy named his diplomatic representatives at the Courts of the friendly nations.

In April 1866, a secret treaty was signed between Italy and Prussia in which the two countries engaged in an offensive and a defensive alliance against Austria.

Two months later, on June 20th, war was declared on Austria. The King of Italy was at the head of his army with General Alfonso Lamarmora as Chief of the Staff. Garibaldi was quickly surrounded by a group of valorous volunteers from every part of Italy, and more especially from the oppressed Venetian provinces, which were impatient to be liberated from the hated Austrian rule.

The Austrian Army of 150,000 men was inferior in number and idealistic force, while the Italian Army, with the Garibaldini numbered some 200,000 enthusiastic men, inflamed by a patriotic love that renders death as glorious as victory.

For some time Margherita had seen very little of her cousins Umberto and Amedeo, who for the honour of the House were obliged to take an active part in the preparations for war. Vittorio Emanuele had been fighting battles all his life, but it was not until 1866 that his two brave elder sons, Prince Umberto and Prince Amedeo were to advance towards the enemy with him. And it was in this campaign that they were to have their baptism by fire.

The Princess Margherita was fifteen years old, a strong athletic girl, brought up as a real Piemontese, to be physically active. It is probably that early training to which she owed her magnificent health. She loved all outdoor life, and when she was permitted to visit her friends, the Countesses della Rocca, at their villa in Lucerna, she spent most of her time riding a little mule or taking walks in the woods. On those visits she was allowed to forget her rank, to be quite frankly a happy, healthy girl, whose only aim and ambition in life was to enjoy her golden youth to the fullest.

But when her uncle and cousins were at the front, fighting as hard as the simplest soldier in a never-ending war, Margherita could not find any pleasure in visiting even her dearest friends, for there was much for all the Savoians to do in Turin, and somehow there near her mother and little brother it seemed that she could better follow the loved ones with her prayers, her ardent vows to God to mercifully bless Italy, and to bring all the brave ones home safe and sound, after a glorious victory.

In all parts of Italy, the women of the Royal family as well as those of the humblest of their subjects, were occupied in aiding in the preparation of supplies for the

wounded. At that time there were no hygienically prepared supplies, no Red Cross organisations, nor trained nurses, only the patriotic women ready for any sacrifice, who followed the army, and inspired by love and human pity rather than experience, cared as best they could for the wounded in improvised field-hospitals.

It was during this tragic period, only one of the many that she would have to live through, that Margherita really learned to live without play, for the recreation hours for her and her young friends were given up to collecting funds and supplies for the wounded, and thoughts of the cousins, the two brave princes who were constantly being exposed to danger.

Twice on the battlefields in 1866, Prince Umberto deliberately faced the enemy at the head of his regiment, ardently leading the first line troops, and demonstrating an intrepid courage.

Attacked near Villafranca by a squadron of Austrian Uhlans, his life was saved by a battalion of the 49th Infantry, which forming in a quadrangle resisted five times the fury of the enemy, while Prince Umberto in the centre of the quadrangle fought as calmly and fearlessly as though he were merely reviewing his troops on a manœuvring field.

Eye-witnesses told of his bravery, worthy of the heroic race of ancient warriors from whom he descended. A great soldier and famous *Condottiero*, General Nino Bixio, who not even to Garibaldi, his friend and field companion, did he express admiration or praise, on encountering the Crown Prince where the battle was raging the fiercest, he held out his hand, exclaiming with unrestrained enthusiasm: "Your Highness, permit me to shake your hand with patriotic gratitude.

When we have won the war we will know to whom to give much of the credit." And Umberto, with the pride of a true hero, though a modest one, took the proffered hand in both his own, and for a second held it firmly, then without a word he regained his position of command.

At all times he was in the midst of his soldiers, eating with them, sleeping with them, encouraging them by word and action.

News of the valorous conduct of the two young princes was received with joy and pride in all of Italy, but in Turin more than in any other city the enthusiasm reached a delirium when the gold medal for military valour was awarded to their Prince Umberto.

"I knew Umberto would win the highest honours of the war," Margherita confided to her mother.

"How did you know?" the Duchess of Genova questioned.

"Because I asked God," she answered slowly, "to preserve my cousins from harm and," she hesitated, while for a second tears veiled the gentle expressive eyes, "and because Umberto is the heir to the throne I knew that he must have the greatest honours. Had they gone to Amedeo it would not have been well for the reputation of a future King."

"True," the Duchess admitted, wondering no doubt how such reasoning had come to her unsophisticated young daughter.

It is true that Margherita had prayed fervently, with that profound, sincere religious faith that was hers, invoking from God every glory for Italy, and the Royal House of Savoia, to which she was so proud to belong. And each time that word came of a successful encounter, or of new honours for her uncle and cousins, she felt

her pride increasing, and an inward gratitude to their God for the answering of her fervent prayers.

Gifted with a rare and exquisitely intelligent mind, Margherita of Savoia enjoyed studying the glorious records of her ancestors and the history of medieval Italy. Poetry and literature were as attractive to her as the novels and tales of chivalrous times. To her fantasy it seemed that the chivalrous times had perhaps returned with their daring feats of arms, and that her courageous young cousins were those ancient cavaliers for whom the beautiful girls of medieval days embroidered slippers with the colours of their houses. And had she been permitted to follow the dictates of her heart, she would have spent hours in embroidering slippers for her cousins to wear in their moments of repose. But a Royal Princess less than any other girl was not free to dispose of her time when there were hospitals full of the wounded to be visited, and the everlasting poor to be looked after.

History, geography, and languages were her real studies, but from the age of fifteen until her death her greatest joy and preferred study was the works of Italy's immortal poet, Dante.

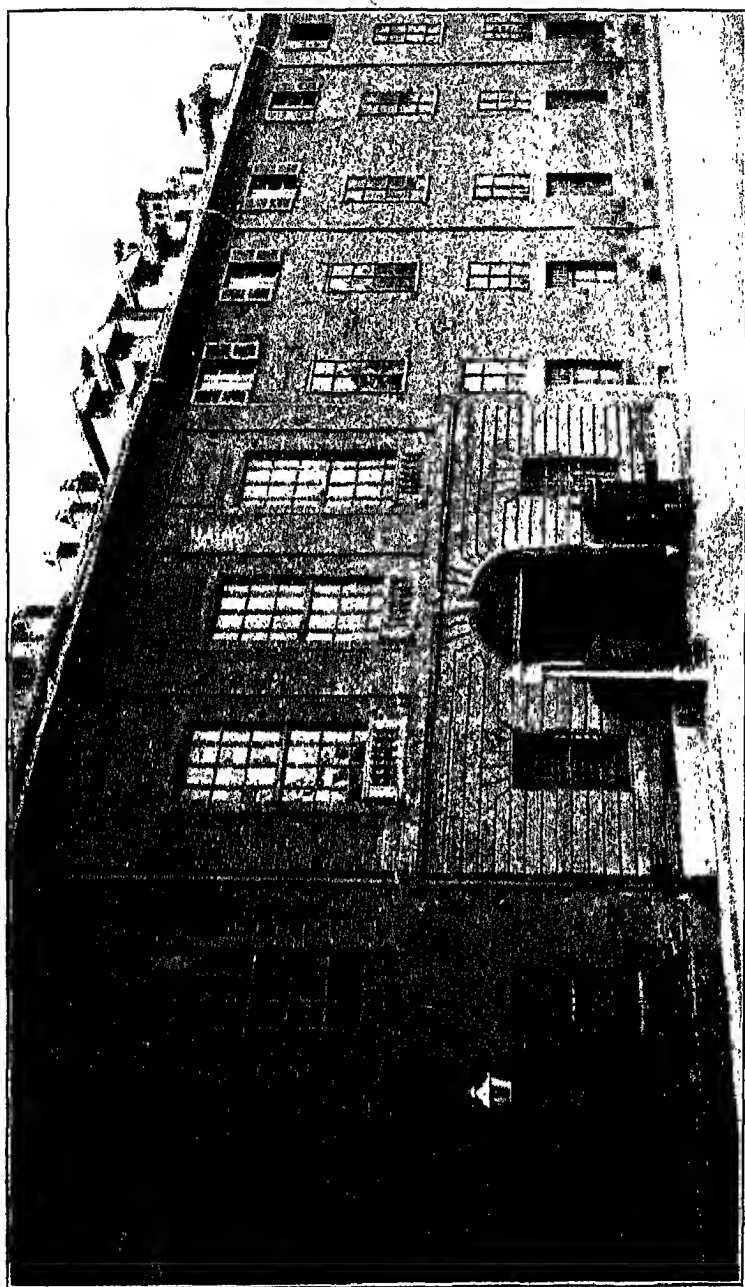
A passionate lover of mountains and wide open spaces, in 1865 Margherita made her first Alpine excursion in her own Alps, those majestic mountains that were to see her often during the course of her life, alpenstock in hand, a bunch of edelweiss or rhododendrons gathered on the heights stuck in her glowing hair. Also in Turin, she went out every day regardless of the inclement weather, or the cold of the rigid winters. The Turinese usually waited near the Chiabrese Palace to be close to that delicate flower of

the House of Savoia, to catch a fleeting glimpse of the ready sweet smile, given to rich and poor alike. In those bygone days, the Royal Princesses and the young girls of the aristocracy did not patronise the milliners, instead they wore black veils on their heads for walking in the city, and white veils fastened by a rose for the theatre, and other festive occasions. Under the black lace Margherita's fair hair glittered like spun gold, and her small, regular expressive features assumed in smiling, a spiritual and fascinating beauty.

Despite the individual valour of the soldiers on the battlefields, the sailors on the sea, the courage of the King and the Royal Princes, of Garibaldi and his brave volunteers, nothing went right with the Italian forces, perhaps because the war actions lacked unity of direction. And after the most terrible sacrifices of life and property the Italian armies were obliged to retreat.

Though the Austrians had been victorious in Italy, immediately after the Italian retreat they began to lose, and in the tremendous battles of Sadawa, in Bohemia, they were completely defeated. Thus in the treaty of Prague they were forced to give Venice to Napoleon III, who in turn gave the city to the Kingdom of Italy. This concession was immediately confirmed with the Provinces of Veneto and the Duchy of Mantova. Peace with Italy was later signed at Vienna, and on that auspicious occasion the Emperor of Austria restored the Iron Crown of Longobardi sovereigns, which he had taken away from Monza in 1859.

On November 7th, 1866, Vittorio Emanuele was received with wild demonstrations of joy at Venice,



CHIAVALESE PALACE, AT TURIN, WHERE MARGHERITA WAS BORN

where the entire population united in rejoicing in their liberation from the yoke of Austria.

The capital of the newly united Italy was then at Turin, but already the necessity of making Rome the seat of the Government was being widely discussed, and the idea encountered much favour from the various political leaders.

With peace came the remembrance of the duty of Royal Princes to marry, and in May 1867, Prince Amedeo, heir-presumptive, married at Turin, the Princess Maria Vittoria della Cisterna, daughter of a rich Italian patriot.

It is unofficially told that Margherita was in love with her second cousin, and had been from infancy. This story seems unlikely, for had it been true there was nothing to prevent the marriage, which would have been most auspicious. But Prince Amedeo sought a girl who was not of royal blood, though in a different way quite as beautiful as his cousin Margherita, and he married her for love. When Margherita was told of the royal engagement she quite openly rejoiced in her cousin's happiness, and before long became sincerely fond of the new cousin-in-law. Withal, there are many who still believe that her outward rejoicing was merely proof of her perfect education and natural diplomacy, as well as a means of covering her hurt pride.

Margherita was too fine, too sensitive a nature to ever dream of questioning the working of destiny; and had Prince Amedeo asked for her hand she would most probably have accepted him, and in becoming his wife would have learned to love him with tender devotion, as in fact she would have loved any man who was presented as a husband suitable for her rank,

beauty and intelligence, and in becoming a wife she would have made her own happiness. She was a sentimental, romantic girl, as were girls in the 60's, but a sense of duty, even when it entailed personal sacrifice, was stronger in her than any love of the flesh. If love could be combined with duty then she would be the happiest woman in the world, but had it been a choice between the two, duty would have come first.

With the passing of the years her soul seemed to open like a magnificent white flower. The sincerity of her nature found expression in writing, as shown by her diary: "I will try never to tell a lie, for lies are the tricks of cowards to cover their weaknesses. I shall be frank, unless for diplomatic reasons I find that I must remain silent." Courageous and daring, with the generous blood of the Savoians in her veins, when she knew the story of the revolution in Vienna, and the precipitant flight of the Royal family, she exclaimed indignantly:

"Shame on them! Rather than finding a way of escape one should know how to die with one's people!"

With a great sense of personal duty Margherita studied much and very willingly from the age of ten, interesting her teachers by her clear decisive observations, comments, and acute, profound impressions. As though seeing herself in a crystal ball she continued to prepare for the glorious future.

One of her first instructors, and the most beloved, was a cultured priest, Don Cipriano Moltura, who taught her the fundamentals of various languages, and more particularly the purest Italian, mathematics, and history. When only fifteen she spoke fluently,

and read equally well, English, French, and German, besides her native Piedmontese dialect.

Every day several hours were given to music, and often Margherita played duets with her mother, who was an exceedingly fine pianist, and whose thorough knowledge of the German classics was responsible for the musical sense which Margherita was to show later.

Painting was studied with Alleson, a noted artist of his time. Her subjects were limited to still-life and landscapes usually of scenes around the palace gardens. Sewing was another pastime that interested her, particularly embroidery, for which she frequently made her own original designs. She always wrote a great deal, letters, poetry, in French, criticisms of Art and Letters, and short stories, usually very sentimental ones—that sentiment which later she was to put in all that surrounded her. The dream princess, some of her friends called her, the princess who should have lived in the cavalieresque and fortunate times of legends and romances.

And while Margherita of Savoia was dreaming and working to while her days away, he who was destined to be her king and husband was travelling over Europe, making friends at the various Courts for himself and for Italy, never thinking of a wife, or the seriousness of family life.

In June 1867, shortly after his brother's marriage, Prince Umberto went to Paris, where he was Napoleon III's guest for three days. In July of the same year he went to Berlin, and was most affectionately received by the King, the Crown Prince and Count Bismarck, all of whom assisted at the grand military review given in his honour.

Some days later Umberto arrived at St. Petersburg, where he was met at the station by the Czar himself, accompanied by several Grand Dukes of his Court and the famous Gorlschakow, who then exercised a great political power in Europe. The Czar was most impressed by the gracious modesty of the valorous young prince, who appeared so serious and reserved. He was so impressed that he at once decided to confer upon him all the cavalieresque orders of the Russian Empire, including the grand decoration of the Cordon of Saint Augustin. As another sign of his august favour, the Czar accompanied Umberto of Savoia to the field of Tsarskoe Selo, where together they assisted at the manœuvres of the Imperial Guards.

On August 1st, on his way back to Italy, Umberto was for a second time a guest of Napoleon III at Chalons. On the 15th, then the national holiday of France, he was present at the military review, and took part in the *Te Deum*, sung on the field in the midst of the troops. The French papers were filled with praise of the young Italian prince, who, completely lacking in personal vanity, always considered all tributes paid to him as honours paid to his country, to which then, and always, he consecrated most of his thoughts.

Upon his return to Italy towards the end of October, the King, his father, taking a moment alone with him, suggested that having known wars and active life at the front, having travelled and visited the important Courts of Europe, and having associated more or less intimately with the greatest royalty, been among the most beautiful women, having had an opportunity to live freely the life of soldier, prince, and man, it was about time for him to select one woman from the

many he had known, and to decide to marry her, and settle down to the more serious business of bringing up a family. Someday, Vittorio Emanuele II reminded his son, he would have to come to the throne, and it would then be necessary for him to give Italy a queen, and an heir as well, for the dynasty must continue.

Umberto had no suggestions to make on the subject, or any idea of selecting a wife for himself. He had found all the princesses of his acquaintance attractive, yet none of them seemed to stand out in his mind as a possible life companion, therefore he left the choice of a wife to his father, who he believed knew what was better for him than he did himself.

As the relations between the House of Hapsburg and the House of Savoy were most friendly after the campaign of 1866, Vittorio Emanuele proposed the Princess Matilde, daughter of the Archduke Albert, to his son. And as a dutiful son Umberto accepted his father's proposition.

He had never seen his fiancée, and he was not particularly interested in her, but, of course, they had to meet. However, before he was able to arrange for a visit to Germany she died from a most dreadful accident: She was smoking when someone entered her room unannounced, and in order to hide the forbidden cigarette she put it back of her without thinking that the burning end could set fire to her light frock. The filmy material became a flame, and before help could get to her she was burned to death.

And so once again Vittorio Emanuele faced the problem of finding a suitable wife for his son and heir, a woman worthy of being Italy's first queen, the mother of so new a country, for while Rome was as

old as the world, Italy was young, and her first king had not given his people a queen, and from a sentimental point of view a queen was a necessity in any monarchy.

What was he to do? Where to turn to find the proper princess?

CHAPTER V

TWICE A PRINCESS

MARGHERITA was not quite sixteen when King Carol of Roumania asked for her hand. There were many royal princesses to choose from in 1867, and the honour conferred upon the youthful Savoian princess was a great one.

Margherita had never seen King Carol, and she knew very little about him, other than that he was a king and reputed to be exceedingly handsome. Yet when the Duchess of Genova, her mother, told her of the official demand for her hand, she considered the question for a minute, then said: "Mother, I know that I must do what you and my uncle say, for that will be what you think best for my future, but if it is not necessary for reasons of State, I beg you to permit me to remain in Italy." Later she told her governess that she would never consent of her own free will to marrying a foreign prince, for it would kill her to leave her beloved country. Then heatedly:

"I'll stay single all my life, become a nice kindly old maid rather than accept any foreign crown. Yes! I'll renounce a thousand crowns in order to remain in Italy!"

But fate had decreed a Savoian prince for her fortune and the fortune of Italy.

One morning shortly after the death of the Princess

Matilde, Vittorio Emanuele, conversing with his aide-de-camp, General Menabrea, expressed his desire to see the heir to the throne married. He asked the General if he could suggest the name of some princess who would be suitable. The General smiled wisely and replied frankly that he could not imagine how His Majesty had failed to discover the most beautiful Princess in all Europe, and at the same time quite the most suitable wife for Prince Umberto.

"And who is the most beautiful Princess in Europe, and at the same time the most suitable wife for my son?" Vittorio Emanuele asked excitedly. "Is it possible," he added, "that in my anxiety to find a wife for Umberto I have actually overlooked someone?"

"You most certainly have, Your Majesty, for the princess I have in mind is no other than Your Majesty's own niece, the Princess Margherita."

"Margherita? But she's a mere child!" the King exclaimed. "A mere child who would not know how to do other than play."

"No longer exactly a child, Your Majesty," General Menabrea insisted, "but a radiantly beautiful, cultured and truly good girl."

Vittorio Emanuele was struck by this suggestion, and moreover he was not displeased with the thought of the first Queen of Italy being a princess of the House of Savoia.

Prince Umberto was then twenty-three years old, and Margherita barely seventeen.

For four years the King had lived most of the time far from Turin, having morganatically married the Signora Rosa Vercellana, to whom he had given the title of Countess Mirafiori, and by whom he had had several children. During those four years he had

seen very little of the Duchess of Genova and his niece and nephew, and therefore he still thought of Margherita as the little girl, serious and extremely pretty, who had looked upon him with the reverence that a child would naturally give to a king, even when he is her uncle. Curious to look deeper into this suggestion he decided to go to Turin at once so as to assure himself that General Menabrea had not exaggerated in his praise of Margherita's beauty and charm.

He told his son nothing of this proposed visit, in fact he kept the whole matter entirely to himself, arriving unannounced at Turin. From the station the King went directly to his lamented brother's widow, whom he asked, as soon as propriety would permit, to allow him to see his niece. But before asking to see Margherita he did not make his reasons known to the Duchess, fearing that he might find the girl too young in her ways, or not quite to his liking, and once he had stated his desire it would be hard to retract.

The young Princess Margherita was then very slender, very blonde, with a lily-white complexion that rendered greater and more vivid the profound blue eyes. Her smile was captivating—it had already captured many—so what more natural than for it to capture a king who was searching for a bride to give to his son?

Margherita was busy embroidering with several friends when a servant announced that the Duchess wanted to see her at once. She ran gaily to the small private reception-room expecting to find her mother with some intimate friend of the house; instead her uncle's cheery voice greeted her.

To the hardy warrior, she was a vision from another world, a vague ethereal creature. Instantly, he was caught by her beauty and modest reserve.

The King knew from hearsay that Margherita had lived tranquilly, studying a great deal, and taking little part in worldly society. In talking with her he became more and more pleased with her, for he found that she was not only gracious and cultured, but of such mature judgment as to convince him of the possibility of development into his personal idea of a perfect queen.

Feeling instinctively that there was something of great importance in the King's almost clandestine visit, the Duchess of Genova, on the excuse of an urgent letter to write to a sick friend, left Margherita alone with the jovial, frank, plain spoken sovereign who, without preface, told her of the mission of his flying trip to Turin. He told her of the esteem and affection his son Umberto had for her, and that he himself wished immensely to see her Princess of Piemonte, and later the first Queen of Italy.

Gently, sweetly she bowed to the royal edict, bowed before the King, whose wish was her law. Deeply touched by his selection of her to fulfil the highest honours of their country, she remained silent—her silence being her consent to his demand. A few minutes later, when the first emotion had passed and she could trust her voice she said that when Umberto had agreed to his father's wishes, she would agree also.

Prince Umberto, like all the members of his House, and in fact everyone who came near her, admired Margherita. And when his father proposed her as a wife, and assured him that his suit would meet with

favour, he insisted upon going to her at once, to hear the truth from her own lips.

It was a glorious day in February 1869 that the Duchess of Genova again sent for her daughter, this time saying that the King wished to see her. Margherita, trembling to her finger-tips with joyous anticipation, went down at once, and on entering the private reception-room, instead of finding the King as she had expected she found Prince Umberto.

A few minutes before the Duchess of Genova had promised Umberto to permit him to see Margherita alone, in order to personally ask her to marry him. The Duchess believed as Umberto did, that Margherita should be allowed to dispose of herself quite freely, for they were convinced that no ambitious consideration would have influenced so thoughtful and sincere a girl to accept a suitor unless she believed that she could consecrate all her affection upon him, and feel herself able to look upon him all her life as her protector and master.

Umberto knew well the proud nature and pure soul of his fascinating cousin, and it was because of his desire to see for a second into the inner working of her mind that he had wished to speak to her privately.

When the Duchess, with secret inner benedictions had left them alone, Umberto came and stood before Margherita, and with military frankness asked :

“ Margherita, do you want to be my wife ? ”

Hers was a pure heart, young and free, and it bounded with joy before the valorous young prince. Smiling, and blushing modestly, Margherita of Savoia replied :

“ You know, Umberto, how proud I am to belong to the House of Savoia, and being your wife I would be doubly Savoyan.”

Umberto bowed to kiss the little hand spontaneously offered to him, and a something new and grand seemed to well up in his heart, a something which made him feel suddenly that God had in that moment given him the greatest gift that a man can receive, be he destined to a throne, or the most humble manual labour ; that of a wife who can give herself with tender affection for the happiness and honour of her companion.

She was only seventeen, and from experience she knew nothing of the life of a woman. She had been sheltered from scandals, from pettiness and gossip ; she knew nothing of the life of the world, the world in which she was so soon to play an active part. Unexpectedly, she had been asked to leave her girlhood behind, and to join in the rank and file of women in the world of intrigue and falseness. She who was ignorant in the ways of the world had been asked to give herself to a man, a soldier, a world-traveller, and a future king.

Before Umberto had time to do more than kiss the warmly offered little hand, Margherita had slipped away from the reception-room and back to her own apartments. There she found her governess, Baroness Arbesser, and throwing her arms affectionately about her neck, she hid her face on the shoulder that had so often been her place of refuge. After a few minutes, she said simply :

“ I’m engaged to Prince Umberto.”

Then it was that the woman who had been so close to Margherita from her childhood, was permitted to show her real love for her young charge. In silence she held the girl close, her own heart too full for words. She was going to lose her charge, so good, so tender, and so true. The happy little girl was soon to come

into woman's estate, and a man, a rough warrior, would have to think of saving her pain and trouble as she herself had been doing for years. As the loving arms of the middle-aged woman held her close Margherita felt tears dropping on her cheeks. She looked up inquiringly. Then putting her arms once again about the neck of her governess she said :

"Do you love me like that? Do you love me so much that it makes you sad to think of losing me?"

"Yes, Your Highness, and perhaps even more than words or tears can ever tell."

"And I love you as much as you could possibly love me, but—I'm too excited to talk about anything now, for I don't know whether I'm happy or what's the matter with me!" And in order to calm herself she sat down to recopy several autographed letters of Carlo Emanuele III, Duke of Savoja, which had been entrusted to her by the Court library. This work sufficed to restore her usual calm, which she did not want to forsake her even in the supreme moment of her life.

That same evening at an intimate dinner, and also at a small reception following it, Margherita announced to relatives and intimate friends the news of her new-found happiness.

Just how great an impression her new importance before the world made on the modest little princess, the world never knew, for though the official announcement of the engagement produced a wild enthusiasm in all of Italy, Margherita continued to be the simple little girl beloved by all her friends.

The prospective marriage was the topic of conversation in the homes of the rich and poor alike, until by constant repetition, and perhaps some exaggeration

of the qualities of the future queen, it seemed to the Italians that new rays of light were beginning to illuminate the sky of Italy, and that Margherita of Savoia was destined by Providence to consolidate the union of the people with the throne.

At the time of his royal engagement, Umberto of Savoia was a general in the army and lived at Milan. He came to Turin very often to see his fiancée, and both radiantly happy, they appeared at the theatres, at charity fêtes, and frequently Margherita persuaded the Prince to accompany her on a round of visits to the poor (a daily duty that never was neglected even in that most joyous and fatiguing period).

Umberto was proud of her youthful beauty, proud to know that he had won her pure heart, proud to see better each day the particular gifts of her ingenuity and greatness of spirit, her exquisite tact and political intuition in the far from facile moment that the country was passing through.

The entire Court expressed great satisfaction and joy over the news that Margherita of Savoia would not leave them to marry a foreign prince, as they had feared she was likely to do.

An old and devoted friend of the King, a man who had known Margherita from birth, and who enjoyed seeing her often with her mother, the Duchess, offered her his sincere congratulations shortly after the engagement was announced, laughingly adding that he feared that her new position of prospective Crown Princess would not only take her away from Turin, but perhaps make her forget her old friends.

Margherita protested. The old gentleman insisted that even the greatest people at the beginning of a change in position, often did not disdain old friends,

but sometimes they asked, and even followed advice, and then after a little time found a way to keep them at a respectful and discreet distance. The future Crown Princess got up from her low chair, took a photograph from a package on the desk, and signing her name: "Margherita of Savoia," she handed it to him saying: "If it ever happens to you to find me changed towards my old friends, give me back this photograph."

The faithful old friend kept the photograph so long as he lived, for to his joy he found that though events changed the face of Italy, Margherita of Savoia remained the same sincere, loving and lovable woman. In fact all those who ever came in contact with her found that in her heart she was ever sincere and faithful, and that she only forgot the people she found she could no longer respect, and that even with a loss of esteem she was ready to understand and pardon!

Shortly after the announcement of the royal engagement the Turinese populace were greatly touched to see the Duchess of Genova, Prince Tomaso, Margherita, and Umberto going to visit the tomb of their ancestors at Spuerga, to implore the blessings of their dead parents, the pious Queen Maria Adelaide and Prince Ferdinando. This visit was repeated by Margherita alone with her governess, some weeks later.

It was quite all right to have arranged the marriage to the satisfaction of the entire country, but Vittorio Emanuele was impatient to have the ceremonies take place, to get the young couple started on a journey through Italy. The Crown Prince was willing to wait a reasonable time before settling down, but since his father asked him to urge Margherita to name the day, he suddenly became anxious to have her do it.

April 22nd, 1868, was selected as the most auspicious date.

A few days before the wedding, Vittorio Emanuele, who had always been very fond of his niece, and when she was grown up he admired as well as loved her, wrote to her :

"In me you will have always a tenderly devoted father. And may God bless you as I pray Him to bless the memory of the brother whom I so greatly loved."

And when she asked him after receiving the letter, for a grand amnesty instead of priceless jewels for a wedding present, he the uncle and future father-in-law was greatly touched by her unselfishness and generosity, and he smiled genially as he questioned :

"Why, Margherita do you not ask me for great and priceless jewels ? "

"Why ? " the clear blue eyes opened wide, "Why, because you have already given me the most priceless jewel in your crown—your son." Then she added when the King showed surprise, "A jewel that I must try hard to be worthy of. But rather than jewels, which no matter how gorgeous, are merely inanimate stones, I should like," she smiled wistfully, "to know while the Court and the citizens everywhere are feasting my marriage, that many, many prisoners, who are perhaps more unlucky than guilty, were enjoying once more their freedom. Do I ask too much?" Tears of pity for the unhappy prisoners were in her eyes as she raised them pleadingly to her uncle. "You know, uncle, that not all prisoners are guilty."

"Quite so, my child," Vittorio Emanuele kissed her on the brow. "I can foresee," he said reflectively, "that the guilty as well as the unlucky are going to



MARCHETTA WITH HER
BROTHER TOMMASO



MARCHETTA OF SAVOIA
About 15

have a relatively easy time when the little Princess Margherita becomes Queen."

And the King being a kindly man, even if he had not adored Margherita in that moment, would not have refused her the amnesty which she demanded with such sincerity and charm.

From that day until the hour of the ceremony Vittorio Emanuele repeated proudly to all of his friends: "If you want to make Margherita a wedding present, something that will make her happy, succour the poor in her name."

From far and near came the gifts. Every city in Italy sent marvellous works of art, laces, fans. These presents were of an unbelievable splendour, but of none of them was the august bride so proud as of that offered by a group of Roman ladies who desired to see Rome united to the rest of Italy, under the sceptre of Vittorio Emanuele. The groom and the Royal family gave her jewels, emeralds, and pearls. Of all jewels she preferred the pearls, her name stone, which by their delicacy and splendour seemed most suited to her meek, delicate beauty. Sparkling precious stones were for Court functions, while the pearls was for every hour of every day.

Though Margherita of Savoia became celebrated for her beauty, and was known as one of the most beautiful queens of her epoch, sharing honours only with Alexandra, England's beloved Queen, she was never known to be vain of her beauty, accepting her looks as easily and naturally as she did all the honours showered upon her.

"External beauty," she said once, "is not our fault—it comes from nature and like all things in nature it fades; but the inner beauty, the character,

that is our fault, and as it lasts always, we must make it the reason of our loving and being loved."

On April 21st there was a Court dinner at the Royal palace at Turin, followed by a grand ball. The Royal family, representatives of foreign sovereigns, politicians, diplomats, and the Italian aristocracy from many cities took part in the great social event. The pre-nuptial contracts were signed that same evening in the grand hall of the palace, which for the occasion had been transformed into a covered garden of rarest flowers.

A murmur of admiration was heard when the young Princess appeared on the arm of the Crown Prince. She was dressed all in white tulle, a short corsage and long full skirt, fresh trailing roses being the only trimming; her breast was modestly veiled, her thick blonde hair adorned with a single rose and two diamond stars. Around her neck she wore the historic pearl necklace left by Queen Maria Adelaide to the future Crown Princess. To this string Umberto added a string on their wedding anniversary each year of their life together.

Prince Umberto, slender, dark, in the sumptuous uniform of an Italian general, splendid with all the decorations that had been conferred upon him by divers European sovereigns, wore at his neck the ancient collar of the Supreme Order of Santa Annunziata.

Margherita was a dream of beauty and youthful charm, so lovely that even the complacent Duchess of Genova could not conceal her satisfaction. King Vittorio Emanuele was radiantly happy, and he was proud to let everyone present see it. All his other

children were gathered about him also, but they were of lesser consideration on that festive occasion. Amedeo with his young wife, Maria Clothilde with her crabbed and unattractive husband Girolomo Bonaparte, Maria Pia, then Queen of Portugal, who appeared splendidly regal in a light green gown, marvellous emeralds, and a Court mantle of green velvet.

The clothes worn that evening were of a splendour never before seen in Italy, at least collectively.

Imagine a vast ballroom, with carved gold woodwork, huge sparkling glass chandeliers, and thousands of twinkling candles. At the far end of the room a throne ; gorgeously gowned women, the bright uniforms of officers from every land, their breasts covered with decorations, ladies-in-waiting in Court array, the King's Guards, and then the little Princess making her bow to the serious business of being a Crown Princess, a wife, a mother, a Queen.

Few, if any, who saw her that night are alive now to tell us how the young heart throbbed with a suffocating joy as she headed the long procession to the throne. No one knew then how the little hand trembled as it rested on the young groom's arm. Few there were who noticed the tears so near to falling from the unnaturally bright, serious eyes. To that distinguished gathering she was merely a beautiful bride, and they welcomed her with joy.

After the bridal couple came the members of the Royal family ; the King gave his arm to his daughter Maria Pia, the Queen of Portugal, who, so everyone said, looked exceedingly young in her Court robes. The Duchess of Genova was stately, dowager-like on the arm of the King of Portugal ; Princess Clothilde clung to her brother Amedeo's arm, and her husband

Prince Bonaparte walked indifferently with the young Duchess d'Aosta, who wore a sumptuous white Court costume.

Prince Tomaso, who was still too young to take part in an official ceremony, as an exceptional concession was permitted to appear at the nuptial feast of his only and adored sister, wore the unadorned uniform of an artillery soldier.

In the same magnificent ballroom, the following day, at ten o'clock in the morning the civil ceremony was celebrated in the presence of the same select society. Before going on to the church for the religious functions, Margherita asked the King's permission to respond to the calls and cheers of the crowds that filled the square in front of the Royal palace. Receiving his consent, she went out on the balcony with Prince Umberto, to publicly express her gratitude to the kind Turinese citizens for their enthusiasm of her domestic joy. This was her first appearance before her people as a personage.

The King was much pleased to see that even in such an important moment Margherita was ready to show a kindly thought for the people who might love her dearly, but who were not among the elect invited to participate in her happiness.

Perhaps it was the only time in his life that Prince Umberto took second place beside Margherita, but as they stood on the balcony he realised that though they both received the warm, generous applause that brought tears to the eyes of all those present, it was really for the bride, for Margherita of Savoia, not for the Crown Princess, and that the groom, be he prince or peasant, is of little importance on his wedding-day.

It was a touching scene, but no one in that vast

assembly was so deeply touched as Margherita of Savoia. Her glorious future, in fact her whole life seemed to her to be there in that enthusiastic surging crowd at her feet. Tears ran unheeded down her cheeks, and a dry, tight feeling in her throat prevented her from saying the words of thanks that came naturally to her. She clung to her husband's arm, and tremblingly murmured: "Umberto! Oh, Umberto!"

The streets were crowded with a festive throng from the Chiabrese Palace to the Cathedral, where the Archbishop of Turin, assisted by the Archbishops of Milan and Udine, and the Bishops of Mantova and Savona were waiting to celebrate the Nuptial Mass.

All those present remember her as a living poem of exquisite feminine grace in her splendid bridal robe of virgin white, entirely embroidered in silver, and literally covered with fresh sweet-scented orange blossoms, the fair beauty veiled in precious old lace.

Pale, her face radiantly lit by an inner joy and serenity, standing at the High Altar beside the young groom, facing the high prelates, she appeared the veritable Queen of the Fairies.

At the Court chaplain's demand: "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?" Margherita turned towards her mother and then towards her King, with a slight inclination of her head, as though demanding their consent.

A murmur of admiration passed like a gentle breeze over the crowd. How docile, how respectful she was even at that supreme moment, how well she knew the art of showing herself obedient to those who still had charge over her! And more than ever were they pleased with her.

The Archbishop of Turin pronounced the benediction, while the newly-wed couple knelt devoutly under the ritual canopy before the High Altar. And then, Crown Princess, Margherita of Savoia, a seventeen-year-old girl, took her husband's arm and slowly, regally, they walked out of the beautiful church through a wide aisle of devoted, admiring friends and subjects, to the shouts and acclamations of the awaiting crowds outside.

There were a few more days of festivity at Turin; then their honeymoon, a round of official visits to the principal cities of Italy began. She was Italy's future Queen, and as such she must sacrifice her personal desires, accept the duty imposed upon her, give freely of herself to all those who made her trip a triumphal procession in every city, yet—the heart of the unspoiled girl was heavy with longing for the quiet of solitude with the loved one.

And while the royal bride and groom were passing from one triumph to another, the King was working tirelessly, searching for a solution of the divers political questions pending, and particularly that of Rome. The last problem was the most serious one for Italy, and for that he did not succeed in finding anything concrete.

In the meanwhile, despite Vittorio Emanuele's continual study of the situation the European horizon was growing cloudy, and one saw plainly that the fight between France and Prussia was not far off—one being jealous of the rising "morale" that the boisterous victories gave to the other. Vittorio Emanuele was divided by a sentiment of gratitude towards France and the political interests of Italy, which naturally

carried him towards Prussia. As one man the Italian Government worked in every possible way to prevent war. The King had initiated the negotiations for a defensive alliance between France and Austria, that perhaps would have, at least for the moment, prevented the breaking out of the terrible fight. One of the conditions of the alliance was the evacuation of Rome by the French. Austria accepted this, France did not, and it was the ruin of the French.

Vittorio Emanuele was the first to bow unwillingly to the sad political necessity.

This uncertain condition continued through all of 1868 and 1869, as the war was not declared until 1870, and from the number of the armed forces, rapidity of events and the continuance of terrific battles, it was the worst war in history—up to that time.

Had Italy taken sides with Prussia, and most of the great statesmen advised it, the country would have obtained many advantages, instead neutrality was declared. After the first French disasters the negotiations were reopened and Italy then found herself, according to competent military authority, in the absolute impossible position of helping France.

From then on the French never ceased to cry about the Italian ingratitude in thus abandoning them in their terrible hour, pretending, perhaps, that Italy should have faced ruin, and even worse, without being able to offer them an efficacious relief.

But war was then as it was to be in 1915; past favours were forgotten in present needs.

Events precipitated themselves. The French defeats followed in frightening and rapid succession, and thinking only of saving their own homes the French people were constrained to leave Rome.

Then the Italian Government deliberated the occupancy of the Eternal City.

Had they been able to go to Rome pacifically it would have been better for all concerned. But it was not possible.

The Government used every possible means to enter the city without bloodshed, yet the difficulty of conciliating the national aspirations with the respect due to the head of the Church proved impossible.

And the conflict between the State and Church grew apace.

CHAPTER VI

MOTHER

ON April 27th, 1869, Prince Umberto and his bride left Turin to go to the capital, which was then Florence. Their train stopped for a few minutes at Bologna, where all the children from the Orphan Asylums were gathered together at the station, their little white aprons filled with flowers for the Princess Margherita. After having listened to long speeches, properly thanked the authorities, and spoken cordially to the applauding crowds, touched by the anxious-faced little creatures so ingenuously offering her the early spring blossoms, Margherita got down from the train, and with the simplest cordiality went among the children. Impulsively stooping down she opened her arms to them, embracing and kissing them all, the kind maternal instinct in her telling her that many of them had never known a mother's kiss, and it was the kiss that they would remember even when the face of the Princess had been forgotten.

The everlasting round of receptions at Florence, like those at Turin, recalled receptions of the Middle Ages in their sumptuous glory, all of which was dear to the heart of the romantic bride, who, like every clean-minded girl, knew only the romantic cavalieresque aspect of the times, an aspect so easy to excite youthful imaginations eager for the realisation of ideals. Exotic feasts, balls, and receptions that lasted until daylight

were offered by the Court to Italian society, and the visits of the young couple to charity institutions were warmly and cordially acclaimed by the lower bourgeoisie, as well as the higher.

At Genova an unusual incident that is recalled by some of the oldest residents, is one of the many touching stories told of Margherita of Savoia :

She had heard a great deal of the poor of Genova, and wanted very much to visit, incognito, their own quarter of Porotria, so, modestly dressed in a dark woollen frock with a *pezzotto* (sort of a handkerchief), of white muslin, which the Genovese women of the people wear instead of a hat, she went with a lady-in-waiting, similarly dressed, to see for herself how the poor really live. It is recounted how she, "the gentle little lady," was surrounded by the simple creatures, old and young, who without knowing who she was, felt instantly drawn towards her. She admired their dirty babies, questioned the mothers about their older children, showed a sympathy in the infirm, and offered to help them to get money to go away for the hot months. When at last she departed for pleasanter parts, they gathered together to talk and wonder about the stranger who was undoubtedly not one of them, but whose way of speaking was as Italian as her dress was Genovese.

The misery of the quarter was an acute suffering to Margherita. That evening she talked at great length of plans for relieving the poverty that weighed down the lower classes in every city.

"I know," she said, "that the poor we must have with us always, but why must they always be so poor?"

Prince Umberto had no answer to her question,

though he gladly agreed to her plans for helping the lowly, and was proud that the noble ideas should come from his bride.

In those unforgettable days, between the enthusiastic demonstrations at the beginning of their glorious, happy life together, Margherita never neglected the humble, the poor, the infirm, or those who were sad. She even searched for them, then visited, helped, and comforted them with sincere affection and sympathy. Umberto encouraged and aided her in every way, showing himself from that time worthy of the grand name of *buono* (good) with which he was designated, and which as a pseudonym must go down in history.

In 1869, King Vittorio Emanuele was dangerously ill at San Rossore, one of the royal summer residences. Having no illusions regarding the seriousness of his condition he decided that he was ready for extreme unction, which he had always revered, even though he was not a strict Catholic. The priest who was called to his bedside, before granting absolution asked the King for a retraction of all that he had done against the Church during his reign, and to facilitate matters he presented a written formula to be signed. The King replied calmly : " I consider myself a Christian and a Catholic, and I want to die in the faith. If I have wronged anyone during my life I am sincerely sorry and penitent and I ask God to pardon me ; but as to the signing of the declaration you offer me, I consider that a political act and I cannot accept it without the consent of a Minister. In the adjoining room you will find the Prime Minister, go and talk it over with him." The priest did not talk the matter over with the Prime Minister and the matter ended there. However, the King did not die.

In the early autumn of 1869, the Royal bride and groom arrived at Naples, where they were received with true meridional enthusiasm, that enthusiasm which passes all limits, and even understanding. Many there are who have never forgotten the impressions of the eighteen-year-old blonde Princess, of the deep eyes and magnanimous smile, which seemed to radiate on hearing the cry of joy that came from thousands of Neapolitans. And though sixty years have passed that cry still rings in the ears of a few old citizens, a cry which was repeated in many tones of the harmonious dialect :

“ EVVIVA U FIGLIO DU RE NUOSTRO E CHILLU
SCIORE DA’ MOGLIERA ! ”

(Long live the son of our King and that flower
his bride.)

In no other city had Margherita of Savoia been welcomed so cordially, and because of that first welcome Naples was always one of her favourite residences, and the Royal palace there, if not the handsomest, as a palace, in Italy, has at least one of the most superb views to be found in the world.

The Royal palace of Capodimonte, the ancient villa of the kings of Naples, begun in 1738 by Charles III, and completed in the nineteenth century, besides its sumptuous halls and chambers has a long terrace on the front embracing Vesuvius and all the villages that from Porteci, Torren, and Castellamare, extend in a voluptuous line to the Cape of Sorrento, where the fantastic Island of Capri seems only a step away between the Bay of Naples and Salerno under the blue Italian sky.

There in that exquisite setting the poetic soul of

Margherita seemed to awaken to a new sense of life, to the divine beauty of all things, to the most divine ; that of becoming a mother.

For reasons of State the King wished the hoped-for heir to the throne to be born in Naples, and it was therefore decided that the young couple should take up their residence there. Margherita was contented to be living in that terrestrial paradise during the months preceding the birth of her child, for there every sentiment seemed to be intensified, elevated, to assume a diviner form. There she was able to keep her thoughts away from mundane affairs, to revel to her heart's content in the unutterable joy of becoming a mother.

If prenatal influence has anything to do with the formation of a child's character, then it is easy to understand and to account for Italy's present King's bounty, honesty, loyalty, and big-heartedness, for during the long months of waiting for the coming of the heir, Margherita of Savoia occupied herself with good serious reading, thoughts of betterment for her people and love of her country, as well as in worship of that unborn child, flesh of her flesh and of the man she honoured and loved as husband and prince. And as she waited she grew in physical and mental beauty.

Being a thoroughly religious woman—this has been stressed before and probably will be again—Margherita did not in any way try to change the course of nature, or to determine the sex in advance, but at the same time she did pray fervently for a son to continue the dynasty: while Prince Umberto, like almost every father, was equally indifferent as to the sex of his first-born, the pride of prospective fatherhood satisfying all his desires.

That Prince Umberto was indifferent to the sex of the expected child was, Margherita believed, an attitude taken to keep her happy in the event that a daughter should be born to them. To be a mother was a joy, but above all her joy was the longing to give a future King to Italy, and day by day she became stronger in her faith that God would grant her that sacred and unalloyed happiness.

On the evening of November 11th, 1869, from a box of the San Carlo Theatre, in Naples, announcement was made of the birth of a son to the Crown Prince, Umberto of Savoia, Prince of Piemonte, a new heir to the Savoia dynasty, who was to have the title of Prince of Naples, and would be called Vittorio Emanuele, after his glorious grandfather, Vittorio Emanuele II, first King of united Italy. From the orchestra stalls to the top gallery the audience rose with a deafening shout that would have satisfied even a Caruso or an Eleonora Duse's desire for applause.

The orchestra played the Royal anthem, while old and young alike joined in the demonstration of hilarious joy. Church bells pealed forth the glad tidings, telegraph wires carried the good news to all Italian cities, and to the world at large, that a new king had been born.

And in a superbly appointed bedroom in the palace overlooking the magnificent Bay of Naples, under the mysterious peak of Vesuvius, a wee baby boy for a moment lay peacefully in the arms of his mother, an eighteen-year-old mother, proud and happy to know that her prayer for a son had been granted, that the human atom might stand as a symbol of her love for the husband, who at that moment, as he had for

nine long months, watched over her with paternal pride, and a symbol of her love for Italy in having given the Italians an heir to their throne.

In such moments when life is intensified by a crisis so acute as to be almost pain, one cannot analyse the sentiments that rise to something like glory in a human being. So Margherita of Savoia was never able to explain her feelings when, the intense suffering of childbirth over, for a minute her son was placed in her arms. "It must have been," she said afterwards, "just what every woman feels at that supreme moment. Perhaps, summed up, it is nothing greater than the consciousness of having fulfilled the grandest, the most divine of natural duties."

A mother gifted with exquisitely refined sentiments feels herself invaded by a supreme responsibility that would be too heavy if it were not made easy by the most sincere, devoted, and omnipotent love that a woman can know. Margherita of Savoia possessed the sentiments that glorify maternity, and the ineffable love that came to her when straining her son to her breast was only disturbed by her thought of not being permitted to nurse him herself. But, contrary to certain customs in Italy, she was allowed to select the young peasant woman who was to be his "BALIA," and during the first months of his life she took practically entire charge of him, as her mother had done of her, bathing and dressing him, watching for his first smile, playing with him, and often singing him to sleep.

The strong young peasant nurse always recalled with passionate reverence the maternal love of the Crown Princess for the Royal baby, and how the lovely young mother would come into the nursery, take him in her arms and carry him into her own

room, there to play with him much as a little girl plays with a doll, and only when she had rocked him to sleep would she give him back to his nurse.

On November 14th, 1869, in the private chapel of the Royal palace of Naples, Prince Vittorio Emanuele was baptised. The city of Naples presented him with a cradle of tortoise shell, mother-of-pearl and coral, made from a design by Dominico Morelli, a great artist of that time.

King Vittorio Emanuele II had not recovered from his serious illness when the little prince was born, but as soon after as he was able to go out of his room, his own one wish was to go to Naples to see his first grandson. The day that he was expected at Naples Margherita took the baby to the station to meet him, wanting herself to put him in the arms of his valourous grandfather.

The scenes of exaltation began with the King's arrival, and continued from the station to the Royal palace. The Court carriage was surrounded and followed by shouting, applauding crowds, seeming more exhilarated and hilarious at the thought of the family meeting than any purely monarchic sentiments could have made them. They were not meeting a king and a future king, but a grandfather and his first grandson, for a sympathy and respect for domestic reunions being one of the outstanding Neapolitan characteristics, ignorant as they sometimes are of life, they still have a reverence for the sacredness of home ties, of which the mother is as the altar. And there, in the Court carriage, before those shouting men and women, was the young mother with her first-born. She was their future queen, it is true, but in that moment she was a mere human mother, and



MARGHERITA OF SAVOIA
Crown Princess

beside her sat the proud grandfather, a mere man then, even though he happened to be their King.

As the Neapolitans loved and respected Margherita of Savoia the first time she made her public appearance after the birth of Vittorio Emanuele going to the station to meet her father-in-law, so did all of Italy love and respect her until the day she was laid to rest beside her husband in the Pantheon at Rome. Never did her carriage, and later her automobile, pass through any street unnoticed, never did she stop anywhere that a cheering crowd was not instantly about her, and never, so far as the writer has been able to learn, was a voice raised against her.

The position of a Crown Prince is a very difficult one in a constitutional kingdom, as he is unable to express any personal opinions, no matter what important political controversies may arise. This position could be changed if the Prime Minister and King would agree, but in Italy during Vittorio Emanuele II's reign they did not, and so the heir-apparent to the throne was constrained by his position to keep to the most scrupulous reserve, even when there were most unresolvable problems to be solved.

Both Umberto and Margherita of Savoia were much interested and concerned in the fight which was going on between the Church and the State. Margherita, religious as she was by birth and education, was yet fully conscious of the political necessity of the complete unity of Italy, and that the unity so necessary for the State would probably be the means of a rupture with the Church, as the seat of the unity could only be at Rome.

The King supplicated the Pope not to encourage

conflicts, nor by useless resistance to prolong the condition of affairs which might prove extremely offensive to the Church and to all Italians. And Margherita on her side prayed for divine guidance for her King, and State, and a sanctified accordance with the Pope.

Vittorio Emanuele fully described the possibility of certain public opinions in all of Italy, and how profoundly he felt it his duty to satisfy the national aspirations of his people, not only for love of order, but for the major interests of the Church as well as the State. By this stand he hoped to appease the Pope, and also to convince His Holiness that by a complete accord between the two powers, the Church would have everything to gain, particularly as the Pontiff could then accept the protection of the Italian Army.

However, King Vittorio Emanuele II was not able to bring about this accord, and so it remained for Mussolini, nearly sixty years later, to convince Pope Pio XI that the Church backed by the State could only become a stronger institution.

On September 20th, 1870, Rome was conquered. This solemn hour in which the complete unity of Italy was accomplished, and the temporal power of the Pope abolished was of a world importance, and should have been known in minute particulars everywhere. The declarations made to Foreign Powers by the Foreign Minister, Visconti-Venosa, were explicit, and expressed with noble dignity. No remonstrances nor protests came as an answer from any foreign nation, most of the Governments approving in silence, while the opinions of the entire civilised world were favourable to Italy.

On October 2nd, 1870, the Roman people were

invited to a public plebiscite. The result was forty-six against Rome being united with all Italy, while the balance of the population acclaimed Vittorio Emanuele II as King of united Italy, with Rome as the capital.

- A week later the King received with great solemnity at the Pitti Palace, Florence, a delegation from Rome which officially communicated the result of the splendid plebiscite.

Unable to control his emotion, his voice trembling, his eyes filled with tears, Vittorio Emanuele replied to the delegates :

" Yes, at last our grand task is completed, and our country united. The name of Rome, the grandest name that human lips can pronounce is united to that of Italy, dearest of all names to my heart.

" The plebiscite, proving the marvellous unanimity of the Romans, has been received with joy in every part of the kingdom. Once more they consecrate the basis of our national pact, and prove again, that if we owe much to chance, equally much is due to the justice of our cause. The free consent of public opinion, the courage of sincere, faithful promises are the force that has made Italy, and that as I see it, have led to the actuation of the unity.

" The Italians are now truly masters of their fate.

" Meeting each other, after having suffered as we have for centuries, in the city which was once the metropolis of the world, the Italians can undoubtedly add to the monuments of past grandeur, the promise of a new and appropriate grandeur by surrounding with reverence the seat of the spiritual power that elevates the pacific emblem even where the pagan eagle flies.

" As a King, as a Catholic, in proclaiming the

unity of Italy, I remain firm in my resolution to assure the Church perfect freedom ; and absolute independence to the Supreme Pontiff. With this solemn declaration, I accept from your hands, NOBILI SIGNORI, the plebiscite of Rome, and shall present it to the Italian people, hoping that I shall show myself worthy of the glory of my ancestors, and worthy of my own present good fortune."¹

The Pope kept to his kingdom, the Vatican ; because of or despite all the King's pacific advances.

Instead of following his troops and occupying the Eternal City as a conqueror, as any other prince might have done, Vittorio Emanuele wanted to wait as long as possible before making the fatal step. At length the occasion came, brought about by a natural disaster, when his presence was an absolute necessity. This was in December 1870, when there was a terrific rise of the Tiber, and subsequent inundation of a part of the city that brought fear and ruin in its wake. The grand old King, with his usual practical way of doing things, easily resolved the delicate question, and left Florence by the first train, arriving at Rome the same night, unannounced. The following morning he walked to the scenes of the disasters, offering comfort to the distressed and terrified people, his newly acquired sons, encouraging them, and quickly arranging for the repairing of the damages done by the flood. He gave material aid as well as counsel, and through many hours worked tirelessly among the ruins.

His words and acts during that time of disaster brought about one of the greatest triumphs of his

¹ For the benefit of those who may believe that the Church was sacrificed to the Italian Government, I have given textually the words of Vittorio Emanuele.

life, greater than if he had entered the city at the head of his troops.

In order to show himself a King and not a usurper, Vittorio Emanuele took the trouble to send his aide-de-camp, Marchese Spinola, to the Vatican to present his respects to the Holy Father, Pio IX, and the Holy Father, no doubt so advised, refused to receive the King's messenger. However, Marchese Spinola was assured that the Pope himself desired to send the King his personal greetings and thanks.

That was in 1870, and until 1929 a Pope never left the Papal precincts. Through struggles and world strifes the spiritual reign passed from one Pope to another, and each remained outwardly firm in the tradition of Governmental abuse. The strength of the spiritual sword was felt all over the world, while the Holy Man who swayed it remained a prisoner in his palatial halls and gardens.

The reconciliation of the Church and State was one of Margherita of Savoia's greatest wishes, her constant prayer, and in her day she did all within her power towards it. Yet, unfortunately the act was not accomplished until over two years after she had gone—when the knowledge of this accomplishment would have added so much to the happiness of her last days.

The day in which Vittorio Emanuele put his foot in Rome as King his mission was fulfilled. The PATRIA redeemed and united, the national monarchy conducted to and settled in Rome, he disappeared as a living hero to enter the rank and file of heroes of the past, glorious and valorous, but nevertheless, the past.

CHAPTER VII

QUEEN

IN the beginning of 1870, Margherita was installed with her family of three in the lovely Royal villa at Monza, the villa which many years later was to be the scene of her life's tragedy. And it was during their residence there that the Romans asked to have the young Royal couple satisfy a popular vote by transferring their official habitation to Rome.

As the Crown Prince and Princess had had several similar demands, the Council of Ministers decided that the only way to bring about a decision to placate the Romans, was to nominate Umberto, Commander-in-Chief of the First Army Corps, which was then stationed in the new capital. Then it was that Margherita of Savoia first showed the superiority of her character and of her thoughts by admitting the duty imposed upon them by the new conditions. The continued conflict between the religious and patriotic sentiments was still most painful, but knowing all the steps the King had taken to show the respect and devotion of the House of Savoia for the Supreme Pontiff, her task of accepting the new arrangements was made much easier.

So, the young Princess, like all good Catholics in Italy as well as in other countries, understood that, if, for State reasons, Italy had been constrained, in order to complete the unity of the country, to occupy Rome

as the capital, political reasons of an inferior order had inspired the stubborn clergy to act in such a way as to prevent Pio IX from following the divine impulses of the humble soul, which as an example of Christian love could have had a much more beneficent influence on the faith than on Italy itself.

When it was finally settled that Prince Umberto must go to Rome, Margherita did not hesitate to follow him, believing it her duty to be with her husband, as an Italian wife must follow her husband, even to the end of the world, regardless of her own personal desires. Firm in the faith that God would help her to affront the difficulties of the trying situation, and also to live so pure, so noble, and so pious an existence as to prove to the people of Rome that the House of Savoia could keep themselves to the religion of their fathers, even if political events had forced them to live in the ancient capital of the Pontific States, Margherita left Monza for Rome.

On January 23rd, 1871, at four o'clock in the afternoon, the Crown Prince and Princess with the baby Prince Vittorio Emanuele and their Court arrived at Rome. Those who were at the station, or who saw the Royal equipage driving to the Quirinale Palace, recall how vociferously they were acclaimed ; for notwithstanding a drenching rain—at the station, and along the streets leading to the Quirinale Palace—a dense crowd applauded continually and wildly.

The Royal suite in a closed carriage, moved at a walk. Margherita knew instinctively how much all those men and women desired to see her, and despite the pouring rain and the cold wind, she ordered the top of the carriage to be lowered. Then the applause came in great waves, echoing from street to street,

until it reached the Quirinale, while the Princess smiled and bowed her thanks for the warm welcome accorded her.

She conquered the Roman populace the day she arrived in the Eternal City, and always they were devoted and grateful for the good she did them on every possible occasion.

From the time they settled in Rome, while Umberto was occupied with military duties, which were the arduous ones of a commanding general, as well as ordering reforms for the betterment of the health and general well-being of the Army, Margherita, accompanied by her favourite lady-in-waiting, the Marchesa Paola di Villamarina, began visiting the hospitals, the schools, and all the educational and charity organisations of the city, interesting herself as she had done from childhood in the sick, the aged and infirm, comforting and aiding them, and promoting the development of common education.

No lady would have been more or better suited than the Marchesa di Villamarina to hear and interpret the elevated thoughts and generous sentiments of Margherita of Savoia. And though many other ladies-in-waiting came to her service later on, the Marchesa di Villamarina remained the most beloved, the closest to her heart at all times.

From the time that she was appointed "Dama d'onore" to Margherita of Savoia, in 1866, when they were both young, the Marchesa di Villamarina believed that the august Princess would ably use the gifts placed in her hands, that the fine humanitarian, profoundly Christian sense would not fail to touch the most hostile hearts, and find a deep and lasting harmony there.

The Marchesa di Villamarina's was a rare example of faithful devotion and loving friendship that never wavered, never changed. They lived in continual intimacy, in harmony of thought and sentiment. Through long years, through strenuous events they walked side by side, hand in hand, and according to those who were near them at all times, they never quarrelled, never had any serious difference of opinion—and the Marchesa di Villamarina was not a weak or easily led woman, who would have sacrificed her own ideas and ideals because of duty to her simple superior—rather would she have left the service of the Crown Princess, and later the Queen, than have her personality absorbed by the other.

Often Margherita asked advice of her friend and lady, and usually she followed the wise counsel given.

And so dearly did the Marchesa di Villamarina love Margherita of Savoia, that when too old for active service to her Queen, she passed on to her daughter the duties which she had enjoyed for so many years. The following letter shows that the daughter's love for Margherita was no less than her mother's.

While in Rome collecting data for this biography, I was advised to see among other people, the Countess Pes, daughter of the lamented Marchesa di Villamarina, and as I had met her some years before I wrote to ask for an interview, stating as delicately as possible my reasons for wanting to see her. A reply to my letter came the next day :

“ I am truly sorry that the reason for which you wish to see me deprives me of the pleasure of renewing your acquaintance. From a sense of delicacy which

you can readily understand, I have always refused to be interviewed on a subject so dear and so pitiful (*penoso*).

"I hope that you will understand and excuse me, and know that if I could make an exception it would certainly be for you. Accept the expression of my best sentiments,

"MARIA CRISTINA PES (DI VILLAMARINA)."

Shortly after the arrival of the Crown Prince and the Crown Princess at Rome, the nobility who had been carefully studying her actions and appearance, began asking for audiences. One and all they were cordially received.

The Roman ladies of the most severe and austere aristocracy frankly admitted that they were charmed by the graciousness with which the young Princess received them, observing among themselves how the absence of pretence and formality seemed to enhance the sweet, dignified simplicity of Margherita of Savoia, whom presently they began to admire not only for her physical attractions, but still more for her exemplary qualities of wife and mother.

In Court society, as well as in that of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie, every word, every action of the woman is noticed and commented on, and often severely criticised. They were ready to find fault with the new Crown Princess, loath to put her on a pedestal for worship. And that is what they were eventually forced to do—and there she remained.

Used as they were to have every public authority represented by the clergy, it took the Romans a little longer to learn to like Prince Umberto. However, in time they felt a certain pride in their Prince, who,

apart from duty, never missed an opportunity to show his interest in their well-being.

Prince Doria, who was then Mayor of Rome, in announcing to the public the arrival in the capital of the Crown Prince and Princess declared that "Their presence was the dearest pledge that the King could give his subjects." And the Romans eventually showed their gratitude by an appreciation of the personal qualities of the young Royal household. However there was still a "fly in the ointment," namely, a group of zealous lawyers of the temporal power of the Pope, who lost no occasion to manifest their disrespect, by means scarcely suitable to religious prestige or Christian sentiment. Their pettiness consisted in launching insinuating phrases in regard to the "usurper" and his son, and in the frequent writing of scurrilous letters intended to incense the aristocratic population to a revulsion against the House of Savoia.

It was then that Umberto and Margherita of Savoia demonstrated the superiority of their characters by never lessening their esteem for the ecclesiastical authority, nor losing for a moment that innate serenity for which they were both so well known, a serenity that always forbids protest or gossip on occasions of puerile revenge.

They believed that only time could modify the point of view of that part of Roman society, which in their ideas of faithfulness to the Pope mixed many unnecessary prejudices that only served to make them enemies to their own people in their own country. Despite all this continual dissension Rome was united to Italy, while the gigantic mole of the Vatican remained in the new capital, protected by the laws decreed

by the Italian Parliament, and signed by Vittorio Emanuele. Yet, in those strong walls the fight to reconquer the temporal power glowed, not through the Pope himself, but through others who searched for means of creating difficulty and annoyance for all members of the Royal family, perhaps because they themselves were not able to inflict these difficulties directly on Italy.

The majority of the Romans, with the unanimous plebiscite having demonstrated the sincerity of their enthusiasm for the new political order and their wish to be united under the same flag with the rest of Italy, were still insufficient to act effectively against the powers of the anti-national party, which pretended to defend solely the religious rights.

The task of giving a practical demonstration of the right and wrong of the situation would have been too difficult for any one political man, even for the King himself, but he was aided and abetted by Umberto and Margherita, who had all the qualities necessary to succeed in the arduous undertaking. There is no contemporary of that time who does not admit that the Crown Princess did more than any other person to neutralise and render useless the pettiness of those Vatican gossips, and their acts of disrespect, which only ceased when it became evident that no one believed in the seriousness or truth of them.

On November 27th, 1871, the first Parliamentary session was held in Rome, in the great hall of Montecitorio. Vittorio Emanuele gave his first speech in the Eternal City. It was a clear speech and created a great coercive force which served to unite the legislators to reach out to the highest means for a

perfectly comprehensive civility. . . . Amidst deafening applause the King ended :

“ The future opens before us rich with promise ; it is up to us to answer to the favours of Providence, by showing ourselves worthy to represent among the great nations the glorious rôle of Italy and of Rome.”

But despite this accord between the King and the Government, the Pope continued hostile, insisting upon being faithful to the premeditated line of conduct, while Vittorio Emanuele, urged by his religious sentiments, and at the same time subjected to the political side, which had been the means of opening the door of Rome to him, and all Italy, took every occasion to show the great difference he made between the Pope and the deposed sovereign, between the Head of the Church and the pretender to temporal power. The Vatican, on the contrary, obstinately refused any relations between the Pope and “ The Piemontese usurper,” as they continued to call Vittorio Emanuele, and as the clericals always spoke of him.

The King, poor man, was doing everything possible and impossible to keep a certain peace, and yet he often heard that foreign fanatics represented the Pope as being his prisoner, *gicente sulla laglia* (living or sleeping on straw). He smiled on hearing this, but it was not a happy smile, and often his words showed how bitter life was being made for him.

Once when he was driving outside the city walls, his carriage stopped for him to admire the rude monumental beauty of the vast, sad Campagna Romana. On seeing the Vatican in the distance, and on the hill beyond the Quirinale, he said smilingly : “ There in

the Vatican is a prisoner who is free, and here is a free prisoner."

Though no official relationship existed between the Vatican and the Quirinale, and no courteous act of the King was ever exchanged by the Pope, the personal relations between Pio IX and Vittorio Emanuele were different. If the Pope did not have the strength of will to oppose those who surrounded him, using as they did their power to prevent him from changing the set line of conduct, at least Pio IX did not personally participate in their sentiments, and often, in frank good faith he turned to Vittorio Emanuele.

As an example: One time without asking anyone's advice, Pio IX wrote a confidential letter to Vittorio Emanuele asking him to have his government remove from a house near a church and monastery certain despicable and corrupt persons.

Having written and sealed this letter on an impulse, the Pope called for one of his guards and ordered him to take the letter to the Quirinale, and to consign it to the King personally. No one at the Vatican knew of this letter in which the Pope explained the circumstances which rendered it scandalous to have such people near innocent young students living in the monastery. He wrote:

"I am more than persuaded that Rome at this present time cannot be the seat of the Vicario of Christ and of Belial."

Then he added:

"Act according to your power and in accord with your Ministers." The letter was signed: "With paternal affection, I pray God for Your Majesty, for Italy and for the Church."

Yet with all these expressions of affection and the King's constant efforts to carry out the Pope's wishes, the fight between the clericals and the throne did not cease. Instead the Papal families seemed to do all in their power to prevent the Roman nobility from crossing the threshold of the Palace, "usurped by force of arms."

Apart from the unpleasantness of it, the fight had very little serious effect on the widening Court circle, for not only did those who had already been presented to the Crown Princess appear at the Court receptions, but many others were continually asking to be presented, so as to be invited to take part in the social events at the Quirinale.

Many Catholics made pilgrimages from every part of the world to see the poor Pope, "the sacred prisoner in misery," and finding His Holiness in his sumptuous palace, perfectly free to do what he wished, and the Crown Prince and Princess so popular with all sets in Rome, they returned to their respective countries with the correct idea of the new situation.

And while all this internal strife was going on, and she had every reason to be preoccupied, Margherita of Savoia never for a moment neglected her occupation of personally caring for and looking after the education of her son. Every hour of her day was taken by important State occupations, yet she still found time to attend to what she considered her first duty, that of being a mother, and to feel the immense responsibility that that name gave her before God and before her country. She wanted her son to be simple, open-hearted, sincere, generous. She had no foolish feminine weakness regarding him, rather was her line of conduct with him austere; she carried it out to the letter, and

made him follow it. It was most certainly for his good, as his after life has shown, though at the time he resented it, and often rebelled.

From their marriage in 1866, Umberto and Margherita travelled a great deal, usually incognito, as the Count and Countess di Monza, visiting foreign Courts, where they were always cordially welcomed. These visits seemed to strengthen the ties of friendship, particularly with the reigning houses of Germany and of Russia. The Crown Prince Frederick of Prussia was one of their dearest friends. So devoted did he become to Umberto and Margherita that he named his daughter Margherita, after the Crown Princess of Italy, and even asked her to be a god-mother.

Not only were the national heads on intimate terms with the young Savoians, but also the uncrowned geniuses of many countries, those who always spent some time of each year at Rome, "the city of eternal inspiration in art and learning."

Among their interesting friends was the celebrated German historian, Gregorovious, who from 1852 had passed the greater part of every year at Rome. He himself was known to have said that his nature was like that of a wild horse; he could be tamed, but if something frightened him he would run away. So, while he was in favour of the unity of Italy, he had been tamed to that, he had no interest in the new Royal society, and had never asked to be presented at Court. However, he did go out to dine at a few of the most interesting and exclusive homes, and one night at dinner at the Villamarinas the Marchesa succeeded in convincing him of the gentleness of the young Crown Princess, and so he agreed to be presented



VITTORIO EMANUELE II
First King of United Italy

on January 24th, 1874. From then on he was a frequent visitor at the Quirinale.

General von Moltke, who had known Umberto and Margherita at Berlin, notwithstanding his dislike for official receptions, managed to dine with them nearly every evening. And at all times he put himself out to speak of them both with deepest admiration. It has been said that he, like every other man, approved of the Prince because of his love for the Princess.

The Government was becoming more and more liberal. A liberal sovereign, if ever there was one, Vittorio Emanuele was not altogether a man to let anyone take entirely the government reigns. He would never for any reason in the world have violated the constitutional laws, nor even have yielded an iota of his authority. Knowing the fears of the State, he had governed with a rigorous hand, and had shown from the first days of his reign that when circumstances called for it, he could be audacious and firm.

But with all his firmness and power, in 1876 he found it advisable to trust certain powers to more advanced persons; the national unity had been achieved and the country must be made to proceed more rapidly towards higher ideals of liberty. This changed idea in the address of the Government produced a curious alarm in the country and outside as well. To an illustrious foreigner who asked the King if the new Ministers were really radical, he answered: "And if they were really radical, what would it show? Am I not here?" And to a Minister who suddenly gave his dimission he said smilingly: "You are wrong to be fearful. We are not precipitating anything. I am keeping my hand on the lever always, and you will see that if the necessity arises I will know how to put on

the brakes in time." But it was never necessary. Governors and governed knew only too well the character of their King.

Though he was easing up a trifle on the actual work of being a King, Vittorio Emanuele took little care of his health, believing that in some mysterious way he had the secret of eternal life. But towards the end of 1877 he was assailed by presentiments which saddened the gay nature. He refused to heed the doctor's warnings, going about much as he had been in the habit of doing. He seemed to think a great deal about his past life, and frequently he spoke of his dead wife, something that he had not done for years. One day at Turin, apropos of nothing, he said to his aide: "There are many who know me as an unreligious man, who believe that I am a Christian certainly, and a Catholic, but a very bad one. I may be all of that, but I know that I shall not die badly, because—" and suddenly his eyes filled—"she who is beyond waiting for me, would not permit me to die other than as a good Catholic."

He had lived constantly with his morganatic wife and their children, when not occupied with State affairs, yet when the end was approaching, and only his physicians knew how rapidly, his tenderest memories were for the lamented Queen Maria Adelaide, who he believed remembered him and always prayed for him as she did for Italy, and their family.

The sunset of the grand King was so rapid that the country had no time to prepare for the immense mourning. The brief sickness, through the disease which had been latent for years, suddenly took on a deadly form, and in the very midst of life, active as he had always been, performing the duties attendant

upon the Christmas and New Year holidays, he was stricken unto death.

The last days of 1877 the King received as usual, surrounded by his Court, talking affably with all the diplomats, joking with some of the older ones, interesting himself in the careers of the younger ones. During the following days there were official dinners and receptions at the Quirinale, and feeling too tired to keep on with the strenuous duties Margherita persuaded her uncle and father-in-law to leave for Turin on January 6th.

Announcement of his departure for a much-needed rest was made. The absolutely necessary functions were given in the usual splendour. On the evening of January 3rd, he was more than usually tired, and on the 4th he was forced to remain in bed all day. He was very weak, but not suffering any physical pain. On January 5th the shock of the news of the death of his old friend General Lamarora, at Florence, was too much for his feeble condition, and he began to sink rapidly.

The last telegram he dictated was sent to the bereaved family, then he arranged for Prince Umberto to go to Florence to represent him at the funeral of his old friend and companion in the War of Independence. Unfortunately Umberto was unable to fulfil this affectionate duty as his father became too dangerously ill for him to leave Rome. Even on the morning of the fatal January 9th, the King did not believe that his life was in danger, nor perhaps nearing its close. The task of communicating the truth to the sufferer was left to Dr. Bruno, his special physician, the brilliant man who had watched over his health for several years.

Vittorio Emanuele had been a sporting king in days when kings were less so than now, and the truth of his condition brought no fear to the brave heart. Not for a minute did he lose dominion over himself, neither did he show surprise or fear. "I've lived fully," he said without emotion, "I have done the best I knew for my country and my people, and I have loved them with a deep and abiding love. Life owes me nothing." Then he asked for the last Sacrament, and to be permitted to say farewell to his children and the close members of his Court.

Surrounded by his loved ones who were gathered about his bed crying softly, while hundreds of his people waited anxiously in the square outside the palace, at exactly two-thirty in the afternoon, in the most profound and solemn calm, as though merely falling into a natural sleep, Vittorio Emanuele II turned his proud head to one side and breathed his last.

His day as an active hero ended, he died, leaving to Italy an immaculate and dear memory, in the cult of which the unity and grandeur of the patria was fortified and exalted.

Margherita, who had helped to take care of her august uncle and father-in-law during his illness, and was present when he received the last Sacrament, had but one grave thought when he was gone; to comfort her husband, the new king, in his sorrow, and to communicate the sad news to her son before someone else might tell him too abruptly.

The Prince of Naples was too young to understand the solemn mystery of death, therefore, in some gentle way, he must be made to realise that the grandfather who had idolised him had been, by the

will of God, taken from them. With her arms wrapped tightly about the small boy, with tears in her eyes, she whispered that the voice so beloved by them all had been stilled forever, as God in His wisdom had taken King Vittorio Emanuele, the brave, tender grandfather to a new home where they could never go to see him, but that he would be their guide and protector from that unseen world.

The little boy was very unhappy over all this sad story, and because his mother was weeping he mingled his tears and sobs with hers ; then suddenly asked : " If God is good why has He taken my grandfather away ? Doesn't He know that we still need him here with us ? "

A real enthusiasm of sorrow, if one can use the phrase, swept over the Peninsula on the announcement of the grave calamity that had struck the country in the death of its liberator, the creator of its independence and unity.

And the echo of this immense sorrow passed over the entire world. The mourning was general and deeply felt, as though each individual had lost his own father. Not a city, not a village, no matter how humble or unimportant, did not look upon the death of Vittorio Emanuele as a tremendous public calamity.

After the sorrow came the glorification. Cities and towns, public and private institutions, tried to outdo each other in immortalising the memory of the "Father of his Country " with monuments and portraits.

When Pope Pio IX heard of the end of Italy's first King he exclaimed that Vittorio Emanuele died as a " Christian, a King, and a gentleman." And it seems that he was greatly saddened and prayed continually,

and ordered prayers to be said for the repose of the soul of the man who through continuous political strife had always been his friend.

During a solemn commemoration at Campidoglio, Prince Ruspoli, Mayor of Rome, proposed sending a petition to the new King to have his father buried at Rome. Then Caranani, no less a person than a republican chancellor, spoke: "SIGNORI, the proposal of the last resting-place of our grand King Vittorio Emanuele cannot be voted like any other sort of a proposition. It must be unanimously acclaimed." An indescribable scene followed. Everyone present, chancellors, important journalists and men of the people arose as one man, and as one man clapped their hands, while many, many among them, wept.

The Kings of Savoia were all buried in the crypt at Superga, in Piemonte, and Vittorio Emanuele should have been laid there among his ancestors. But on the other hand the place of honour in the new monarchy was waiting for him in the Pantheon, at Rome, the capital of the new Italy that he had created.

To refuse to take the body of Vittorio Emanuele to Superga would be a great sorrow for the Piemontese, as they considered him their citizen. Umberto knew this, and wrote asking them to make the sacrifice for the new Italy by permitting the mortal remains of his father to be given to the city of Rome. And the Piemontese replied that Umberto's sacrifice was no less than their own, and that in giving the body of their grand soldier-King to the capital they were perhaps only carrying out their King's wishes, and that a monument costing a million lire would be erected in Turin to immortalise his memory.

And so it came about that Italy's first King was laid

to rest in Rome. His funeral was worthy of the pomp and grandeur of other days, with its caparisoned horses, military music, uniformed officials, and the entire population of the city on foot. The people of Florence sent a wreath of fresh flowers, with the request that the young Queen place it on the late King's casket. This she did, but not intact, for two of the laurel leaves were removed to be preserved in her little prayer book, the precious souvenir from her father, the Duke of Genova.

With her own hands Margherita personally arranged the flowers on the casket in the mortuary chapel where Vittorio Emanuele lay at rest, and in the presence of all the members of the Royal family Umberto and Margherita embraced their King for the last time before the lid was placed irrevocably on the casket. Convulsive sobs shaking her, she clung to the icy hand which she covered with tears and kisses, recalling more vividly each moment how from a child she had looked up to and respected the uncle, who in turn had so dearly loved and protected her.

Between her husband and a lady-in-waiting, she was practically carried from the mortuary chapel to the Royal carriage waiting to follow the hearse to the Pantheon.

The funeral was a manifestation of respect, not only on the part of Italy, but from all the world. It was a recognition of the late King's accomplishment of the greatest political event of that century in Europe.

It must be remembered that when Vittorio Emanuele was born there were seven little States in Italy, dominated by princes who were mostly foreigners. Dying he left a united, constitutional State with a glorious dynasty at its head, a dynasty ready to promote in

every way, to progress, to advance, in economical well-being.

The Pantheon, where Vittorio Emanuele was buried, is one of the few monuments of ancient Rome preserved, practically intact. On his tomb, in gold letters on black marble, is inscribed : "*Al Padre della Patria.*" (To the Father of the Country.)

A few hours after Vittorio Emanuele's death, Umberto issued his first proclamation, touching in its simplicity, which read :

"Having shared your dangers and aware of your valours I feel that I can put my trust in you.— Conscious of your virtues, remember that wherever our flag flies, there as King and soldier, is my heart also."

This proclamation served to comfort the sorrowing populace, and several days later when the King and Queen together received the delegates of the Houses of Parliament, the Vice-President expressed his devotion for Umberto, the devotion of the entire Parliament, and that of all Italy.

On January 19th, King Umberto took his oath of fidelity to the Constitution. The Crown Prince of Germany, who had taken part at Vittorio Emanuele's funeral was to have left for Berlin on the 18th, but the King asked him to remain for the ceremony, believing that Prince Frederick's presence at that time would bring him good luck.

The Grand Hall of Montecitorio was filled by deputies and senators. The gallery and corridors above the deputies' benches were crowded with men and women dressed in deep mourning. In the diplomatic tribune, besides the foreign ambassadors,

there were many special representatives who had been sent to Rome for King Vittorio Emanuele's funeral. Most noted among them all was the Marshall Camobert. Queen Margherita, whose mourning clothes accentuated her beauty, and rendered it more dazzling, more interesting the snowy pallor, was in the Royal tribune with the Queen of Portugal, her son, the Prince of Naples, the Duke of Braganza, the Crown Prince of Germany, Archduke Ranieri, and their suites. When King Umberto entered the Hall an interminable applause greeted him, dying down to a murmur of approval when it was noticed how pale and sad he looked, whereas before he had been considered a happy, carefree Prince. He replied various times to the cheering assembly, plainly showing how deeply he was touched by the demonstration of affectionate sympathy.

A fleeting glance at the Royal tribune, then standing before the throne, the Duke d'Aosta on one side, the Prince of Carignano on the other, the King in a firm, limpid voice took his oath :

" Before God I swear to loyally observe the Constitution and to exercise Royal authority in accordance with the laws, and in their spirit to desire that all my people, according to their rights, obtain full and absolute justice, and to conduct myself in every way for the good, the prosperity and the honour of the nation."

Another long and enthusiastic applause, during which it was observed that the King raised his eyes to the Royal tribune, where the loving glance, dimmed by tears, showed how proud Margherita of Savoia was of the King, her husband.

Back again at the Quirinale the crowds outside called

and called for the King and Queen until they were forced to show themselves on the balcony. Then Prince Frederick of Germany had the brilliant idea of showing the young Crown Prince to the enthusiastic people. The King and Queen retired from the balcony, and Vittorio Emanuele, a little boy, their future King, appeared quite alone, like a miniature statue to the eyes of the astonished cheering crowd. Pandemonium broke forth, shout after shout hailed the little Prince, and once more Umberto and Margherita were called for.

Their future King was standing before them, waving his hand in proud and happy abandon, but he was a child, and it rested with Margherita of Savoia to make him grow into a man worthy of the House and Dynasty. And she was the one they really wanted to see, to cheer again and again.

A Queen at twenty-eight years of age, Margherita of Savoia showed immediately that in more ways than one she was unique. She was born a queen, as other women are born actresses, musicians or servants, and never was she ordinary or banal. Of course, in her intimate life she had difficult and painful periods, as every woman must have. She wore her crown through difficult and painful moments, but always she knew how to keep her place—superbly, regally—always she knew how to maintain the high prestige of her House, how to live up to the Italians' ideas of a real queen whose personal dignity helped in upholding the dignity of the country.

CHAPTER VIII

CONQUESTS AT HOME AND ABROAD

LESS than a month after the death of Vittorio Emanuele II, Pope Pio IX passed away. With his passing a new antagonism towards the Royal family developed at the Vatican. The conclave for the election of a new Pope, according to usage, was held in the Vatican, at Rome. After thirty-six hours, with sixty-one cardinals attending, it was unanimously decided that Cardinal Gioacchino Pessi, a man of sixty, was the most able prelate to govern the Church. As Leone XIII, he ruled the Catholics for twenty-five years and five months.

Outwardly Leone XIII was severely opposed to the new kingdom, but he made a point of showing that he was kindly disposed towards the young King and Queen and that his stand against the monarchy had nothing personal in it.

The Royal family remained in mourning for Vittorio Emanuele for six months, and it was during that period that Massenet, the French composer, went to Rome to conduct his opera *Herodiade*, at the Costanzi Theatre, now the Teatro Reale.

Margherita of Savoia loved music, but apart from her desire to hear the new opera she felt it a certain duty to show her appreciation of the composer's talent by receiving him at the Quirinale.

Massenet was duly informed of Her Majesty's wish

to express her interest in his work, and that she would be happy to receive him unofficially, owing to her inability to give him an official audience while she was in mourning.

Through a lady-in-waiting a proper demand was made for the composer and the day and hour of the visit to the Quirinale arranged. It was for an afternoon late in March 1878.

Massenet was ushered through several salons until he reached one of the most beautiful rooms that he had ever seen, beautiful in its severe cream and gold simplicity and magnificent chandeliers, but except for a grand piano, a stool, and an unobtrusive chair practically lost to view in a far corner, the room was devoid of furniture. A *valet de pied* in gorgeous livery stood rigid at the wide entrance door.

Massenet was thirty-eight years old at the time, an imaginative man with a highly developed sense of beauty. In imagining the meeting with the Queen he had pictured a discreet throne in a very large salon, and had rather expected her to be seated, surrounded by her ladies-in-waiting, ready to greet him. He was prepared to enter with stately tread, to bow deeply before the throne, and, perhaps—to kiss her hand. Instead, he found himself, except for the impressively tall, implacable valet, alone. Evidently he was not supposed to sit down as the valet did not bring a chair, so he stood patiently in the centre of the large room, watching the door, in order to get a better impression of her as she entered.

Presently, from far away he heard like a faint echo : "La Regina !" Louder and nearer a second voice repeated : "La Regina !" Again, still nearer : "La Regina !" Echo after echo, growing louder and louder,

and then the implacable valet at the wide entrance door repeated in clarion tones: "La Regina!"

Massenet gasped. She was not tall as he thought she should have been from her photographs, but in her simple black dress with something dainty and white at the throat she was nevertheless regal. Above the black and white the lovely face crowned by golden hair, more majestic than any diadem, was like an ivory miniature.

Slowly she advanced to where he was standing and cordially offered her hand. "Welcome to Rome," she said simply.

Massenet bowed profoundly, then lightly touched his lips to the proffered hand. "Your Majesty is very kind to receive me, and to welcome me."

They stood chatting about Paris, about Rome, and the many changes in the two capitals; about his new work, until he suddenly realised that by imperceptible steps the Queen had been leading him towards the piano. Then with a gracious gesture and a deprecating smile she said: "I am so disappointed that, owing to my mourning, I am not able to hear your beautiful opera, for I am sure that it is beautiful; but I should be happy to have you play just a bit of the overture for me."

The piano was open, the stool conveniently placed before it. Massenet looked about helplessly. He could not sit down while the Queen was standing. But she had disappeared, gone to the far corner to fetch the lone chair.

"Permit me, Your Majesty!" he was beside her, had taken the chair and was carrying it to the piano. When she was seated he also sat down and ran his fingers over the keys.

"A composer is never a pianist," he said apologetically, "so if Your Majesty will pardon the bad technique . . ." Then with Margherita of Savoia sitting close beside him, Massenet played his opera from the opening overture to the last bar, oblivious of time, oblivious of his surroundings, conscious only of his rapt audience of one.

With the last note he bowed his head on his folded arms, momentarily overcome by emotion. A gentle hand touched his, a low voice, like the last faint note of his own music, vibrated in his ears: "Thank you, Massenet, you have given me an unforgettable hour, an hour which will remain among the beautiful souvenirs of my life."

And presently he was saying good-bye to her at the wide entrance door, and following the gorgeous lackey through innumerable other rooms and out into the open court of the Quirinale to his waiting carriage.

As he drove back to his hotel, the visit to the Queen gradually became like a dream shrouded in mist. The Royal palace faded from his mind, and only the turning of the creaking wheels and the pounding of the horses' hoofs were intelligible, rhythmical, and always they repeated the same words: "La Regina! La Regina!"

The period of deep mourning over, it was the decided time for Their Majesties to visit the principal cities of Italy, where the citizens were most anxious to know and to acclaim the new King and the first Queen.

With a large suite they left Rome on July 9th, 1878, arriving at Spezia the following morning. July 11th found them at Turin, where they were received with

that faithful ardour which only the Piemontese are capable of showing for the Royal fellow-citizens.

The King was pale and ill looking, still showing plainly the suffering which his father's death had caused him. But everywhere it was noted how much more beautiful Margherita seemed under the sacred diadem.

Though they were still in mourning, second mourning, many receptions were arranged for Their Majesties, and one evening the working people of Turin improvised a demonstration for the House of Savoia in the square of the Royal palace. A group of these men begged to be received by the King, in order to arrange for a reception to be given by their union. Umberto of Savoia greeted the men warmly, and gladly accepted their invitation, when he had heard the delegates' greeting :

"Your Majesty: Associated in work and in an exchange of affection, the working-classes are anxious to attain to the highest positions, through sacrifice, fidelity to the King and their country."

Umberto was greatly touched by these expressions of loyalty and shook each man's hand, asking them about their work, their families, and their conditions in general.

And while the King was making friends with the working-classes the Queen, accompanied by the Marchesa di Villamarina, visited, as queens always seem destined to do, all the charity and educational institutions. With sincere love she interested herself in the progress as well as the needs of all, generously aiding those who really needed aid, talking with everyone in such a way as to make them her slaves for life.

Twenty-eight days at Turin, twenty-eight days of receptions and Court dinners; then the King and Queen continued their trip to Milan, where the adversaries of the monarchy predicted a cold, even hostile reception for the Royal party. However, they were mistaken, for the greetings of the Milanese people were spontaneously enthusiastic. From the railway station to the Royal palace the women in the waiting crowds along the streets continually threw flowers at the Royal carriage and cheered the Queen.

Venice, Monza, then the republican city of Bologna. For their arrival flowers had been gathered from all the gardens of the city, from gardens in many suburbs to decorate the station, and to make ropes to line the streets through which they were to pass.

Bologna is one of the most beautiful of all Italian cities, and the least known by the tourist. That August day it was a veritable garden of hanging, waving flowers.

The carriage occupied by Their Majesties, the Prince of Naples and the Mayor of Bologna, could scarcely move through the two wings of people thronging the streets. The enthusiasm was such that the Royal carriage was nearly carried away by the cheering crowd and entirely separated from the other carriages in which their suites were riding, and the *córazzieri*. They finally reached the City Hall escorted only by the working people and students. And had it not been for the timely arrival of a couple of mounted Guards the horses would have been unhitched and the carriage drawn by the students from the City Hall to the palace.

Four thousand workmen invited the King and Queen to the Brunetti Theatre, so that their families might



MARGHERITA DI SAVOIA
First Queen of Italy

have an opportunity to see the soldier of Villafranca, son of the liberator King of Italy.

The Brunetti Theatre was a favourite haunt of the working people, a good enough hall, but certainly not one in which any of the aristocracy had ever set foot, and no member of the lesser royalty would have accepted an invitation to show himself to the lower classes. But Umberto and Margherita felt that they belonged to their subjects, regardless of class, and more than all they were proud of the love of the humblest of their people, the true force and power of their nation—though certainly at the time of their coronation neither Umberto nor Margherita had any idea that one day a man of the people would come forward to save the country from ruin.

The scene at the Brunetti Theatre was overpowering, and for days after the demonstrations of the people's devotion continued. Not only the labouring classes came forward, but many men of high estate, who at the beginning had professed aversion to the monarchy, asked permission to pay their respects to the Sovereigns. First among these men was the great republican poet, Giosue Carducci, who later so adored "the beautiful Queen of the kind heart and sincere eyes."

Margherita of Savoy inspired Carducci to write one of the most exquisite poems ever written in the Italian language, a poem that is unfortunately untranslatable, and also a prose poem which is practically an ode.

"ALLA REGINA D'ITALIA."

November 20th, 1878.

"Onde venisti? quali a noi secoli
si mite e bella ti tramandarono?
fra i canti de' sacri poeti
dove un giorno, o regina, ti vidi?"

“ Ne le ardue rocche, quando tingeasi
a i latin, soli la fulva e cerula
Germania, ecozzavan nel verso
nuovo l'armi tra lampi d'amore ?

“ Seguiano il cupo ritmo monotono
trascolorando le bionde vergini,
e al ceil co' neri umidi occhi
impetravan merce per la forza.

“ O ver ne i brevi di che l'Italia
fu tutta un maggio, che tutto il popolo
era cavaliere ? Il trionfo
d'Amor gia tra le case merlate.

“ in su le piazze liete di candidi
marmi, di fiori, di sole ; e 'O nuvola
che in ombra d'amore trapassi,
l'Alighieri cantava-sorridi !

“ Come la boanca stella di Venere
ne l'april novo surge da vertici
de l'alpi, ed il placido raggio
su le nevi dorate frangendo.

“ ride a la sola capanna povera,
ride a le valli d'uberta floride,
e a l'ombra de pioppi risveglia
li usignoli e i colloqui d'amore :

“ fulgida e bionda ne l'adamantina
luce del serto tu passi, e il popolo
superbo di te se compiace
qual di figlia che vada a l'altare ;

“ con un sorriso misto di lacrime
la verginetta ti guarda, e prepdai
la braccia porgendo ti dice
come a suora maggior ' Margherita !

“ E a te volando la strofe alcaica,
nata ne' fieri tumulti libera,
tre volte ti gira la chioma
con la penna che sa le tempeste ;

“ e, Salve, dice cantando, o inclita
a cui le Grazie corona cinsero,
a cui si soave favella
la pietà ne la voce gentile !

"Salve, o tu buona, sin che i fantasmi
di raffaello ne' puri vesperi
trasvolin d'Italia e tra' lauri
la canzon del Petrarca sospiri!"

CARDUCCI.

. This example of the Italian literature of the day serves as a testimonial of the singular fascination Margherita exercised over all who came in contact with her, and should prove that she would have been celebrated for the rare gift of a great soul, even if she had not been beautiful, and a queen.

Many stories are told of her friendship for Carducci, many there are who believe that their friendship was something more than platonic—"otherwise how account for his conversion to monarchism, he who was such a rabid republican?" It is true that he became a monarchist after seeing and knowing Margherita of Savoia, and that with his conversion came that of many other famous republicans.

It is usually believed that a man will do anything for the woman he loves, be she a simple woman of the people or a queen, so when Carducci openly expressed his sympathy for the monarchy the world of Bologna pretended that his changed attitude was due to his desire to be agreeable to the Queen. Before, on a brief visit to Bologna, the then Crown Prince and Princess were received coldly, while in 1878 the visit of Their Majesties was a prolonged local holiday with continual rejoicings.

Carducci was one of the active members of the republican party, and had he not cared for the Queen, had he not been charmed, fascinated by her there would not have been any conversion or even change in political opinion to talk about. At least, so the world said.

Yes, it is true that Margherita of Savoia had helped in Carducci's conversion. It is undoubtedly true that her loving heart went out to him. In his wild, socially uncultured attitude she saw a desire to be something that he was not ; she better than any woman who had crossed his path, understood the grandeur of his spirit, and therefore his writings. She, more than any other person in Italy, helped to make him appreciated, for she appreciated all art, and those who create it. It is probably true that there was a time when Carducci was in love with Italy's Queen, his Queen. That he might have loved her is quite possible, but not in the way many people were inclined to believe. And certainly apart from her appreciation of his worth Margherita of Savoia could never have cared for Carducci, who as a man was far from attractive, being small, heavy, and never well groomed, nor would she have been interested in him if he had not radiated genius. His mind, his idealism, made him a welcome guest in any salon, and after his first presentation to the Queen he was always welcomed at any Court function.

After the poem to the Queen was published Carducci found himself in great disfavour with all republicans, and particularly with the student element, which loudly cried against his changed ideas on political matters. He was openly accused of being a traitor to the cause of liberty, and not a few went so far as to blame the change on the Queen.

It was said about him that he was " a loud speaker until silenced by a woman ! " Then : " He's fallen in love with the Queen, and she won't have him at Court unless he becomes a crawling monarchist ! " And so on, insult after insult was hurled at him, until

it reached a climax that nearly cost him the use of his right hand.

Carducci earned his actual living by teaching in the University of Bologna. The students had been in more or less silent rebellion ever since the publication of his poem on the Queen, and at last the smouldering fire broke into a blaze. One afternoon Carducci was as usual at his desk in the classroom, when an intrepid youth rose to his feet and loudly accused him of being a traitor to his party.

"To change your ideas when you understand the rights of another party is not being a traitor to any cause," Carducci defended himself indignantly. "I have not betrayed the republicans, rather have I surrendered myself to the monarchists!"

At that statement pandemonium broke loose and an ink-well was hurled at the man who dared to openly express his sentiments. In fending off the ink-well Carducci's hand was badly cut.

"Down with Carducci!" the students yelled.

Then Carducci jumped on the master's desk before him, and towered above the angry youths: "Down with Carducci!" he thundered back at them. "No! Not down, for Carducci has gone up in the world! He who dares to speak against the House of Savoia, our Sovereigns, dares to speak against me, and to me he must answer for his words!" He beat upon his breast with the wounded hand, unconscious of the hurt, or that blood was falling on his coat, the only coat he possessed.

Still unconvinced, still inclined to look upon him as a traitor, but silenced, the students filed from the classroom, leaving Carducci alone to tie up his wound.

Later he resigned from the University and dedicated

his life to writing, at which from a financial point of view, he was never very successful; in fact, he was often in an impoverished condition, but the glory of writing, and the happiness of knowing that he was more and more appreciated in his own country, and by those who mattered to him were sufficient recompense.

Margherita of Savoia was never an intriguer, nor a political meddler, though she studied the most arduous and difficult questions, and was at all times the most trustworthy of King Umberto's counsellors. To her exquisite sensitiveness and her unfailing intuition, to her intelligent appreciation of situations, of men and things, Italy owed many of the just laws, owed the respected position that the country slowly acquired for itself—a young State in an old Europe.

With her conquest of Carducci came also the conversion of all the republican county of Romagna.

In the autumn of 1878, some time after he had been presented to the Queen, who was to use her exalted power to make him appear in his true greatness in the eyes of all Italians, Carducci wrote:

“The Queen, without giving herself the airs of a Royal personage, and without even the appearance of a throne in the great, vast room, was still a Queen enthroned. In the centre of that place, among those black suits with swallow tails, and those stupid white cravats, she stood above them all with a rare purity of line and pose, with a simple and truly superior elegance in the arrangement of ornamentation, of her jewels as well as her clothes—her gown was something between a dove grey and a parma violet, the skirt large and falling softly about her. She did not laugh, nor even smile broadly, but in all her acts and gestures,

in the rarely gentle movement of feet, and of the entire body, in the turning of her head, the inflection of her voice, in her words, she showed a dignified kindness. She looks at great length and the glance of the modestly tranquil eyes is fixed, while the blonde sweetness of the Saxon blood seems to temper a something—I do not say rigid, and I do not want to say haughty, that dominates the brow, and it seems that across the pity of the humble dove, literally from eyebrow to eyebrow a shining light of genius flashes. From the suavity of the dove, she, the descendant of the Amedei and of the Vilchindo, has learned to be courteous to all people: In the palace she is Queen. And I said to her Signora, as to the King in the invocation one says Sire, so to the Majesty of the Queen of Italy one says Signora, as S  nora to her of Spain, and Madame to the Queen of France, when there was a queen."

From Bologna the Royal party went to Florence, then Pisa and Leghorn, returning to the city of flowers for the ninth birthday of Prince Vittorio Emanuele. Eleven thousand children from the public schools were united in the historic Sala de cinquecento (hall of the fifteenth century) to celebrate the great event, and the Queen, leading the young Prince by the hand passed among the children with kindly words and caresses for all.

Ancona, Chieti, Bari—always finding the same enthusiasm along the way—thousands to greet them at every railway station, many of those persons having journeyed from remote villages just to get a glimpse of their King, and the beautiful young Queen, whose reputation for kindness had already passed all confines.

On November 17th they reached Naples. It was their first visit as sovereigns to the honeymoon city and birthplace of the Crown Prince.

Few indeed were the Neapolitans who slept the eve of their arrival, being far too excited and busy with preparations for the grand feasts to be offered in honour of the Royal family. The windows, the balconies along the streets through which the cortège was to pass were crowded from dawn, and an indescribable multitude occupied every inch of the roped-off narrow streets.

In the poor quarters of the city a public subscription, of a penny a head, had been made to present to the Queen on her arrival, the most beautiful flowers procurable in a bronze vase of rare workmanship. This vase they intended her to keep as a souvenir of the poor of Naples. A group composed of the most beautiful girls of the quarter was selected to present the vase of flowers. This gift Margherita kept always, and never, it is said, did she permit it to be overlooked among the rare treasures that were continually showered upon her. It stood for sacrifice and affection from some of her cherished poor, and it was dear to her for that reason.

From the train platform through the entire railway station to the Royal carriage outside, a magnificent carpet painted by the greatest artists of Naples, was spread for the Royal guests to walk on. When the Queen saw the handsome work of art, she exclaimed : " Ah, no ! it would be a profanation to walk on such an exquisite work of art." But when the authorities assured her that it had been painted in such a way as to make it proof to footprints, and that its beauty could not easily be destroyed, she led the way out

of the station, smiling happily as she walked. She was thinking, she told the Marchesa di Villamarina afterwards, of the greatness of Italian art and how in the glorious ages the most famous artists deigned to lend their works to beautify both public and private surroundings.

After the official reception at the station, the Royal family, the civil authorities of the city and the members of the Court took their places in the line of waiting carriages. Being almost impossible to move through the crowds they proceeded at a walk. The King's aides in splendid military uniforms, shining with gold and silver braids, plumed helmets and numerous decorations on their breasts, were in the first carriage. In the second carriage sat the King, the Queen, the small Prince, and the Prime Minister, Benedetto Cairoli, who had accompanied them on their journey through the provinces.

So strong was the wildly cheering, yelling and clapping crowd that they broke through the line of soldiers guarding the thoroughfares, and surrounding the Royal carriage, succeeded not only in separating it from the others, but from the *córazzieri* (armed guards) as well. Had the guards made a rush forwards as they should have done, they might have trampled under foot the delirious mob, who in their demonstrations of joy had forgotten fear or danger.

In this way the wide open square in the heart of the city was reached. Then suddenly an insignificant individual, a restaurant cook, Giovanni Passanante by name, got close to the Royal carriage holding high in his left hand a petition which he apparently wished to give to the King. Under a red cotton handkerchief a knife was hidden in his right hand. He jumped on

the carriage step as though to present the petition, then quickly drew forth the knife and raised it. Margherita saw the shining steel and with great presence of mind threw her bouquet of roses in the would-be assassin's face ; then, how she never exactly knew, she managed to get in front of the King so as to shield him with her own body. Panic-stricken, deathly pale, she screamed : " Cairoli, save the King ! "

It all happened so quickly that no one near at hand realised what was taking place. Cairoli managed to grasp Passanante's hair, the shock of having a grip on his head forcing the raised knife to drop from the man's hand and to enter lightly Cairoli's hip. His wound was slight and the King's life was saved.

The little Prince Vittorio Emanuele remained calmly in his seat, facing the danger with the poise of a true Savoian.

Captain di Gionannini, commanding the Guards, rushed in with raised sword and caught Passanante on the head with sufficient force to knock him down. Students and police were instantly upon him, and had he not been hurried away by the police he would probably have been lynched on the spot by the infuriated crowds. Not being able to lynch him they cursed him, not only for having attempted the King's life, their kind, good King, but for the stain that his act had brought on Naples and her citizens.

In order to calm the excited mobs the King and Queen remained smilingly in the carriage. By the time they reached the Royal palace Margherita was trembling from nervous exhaustion and had to be assisted to her room.

An hour later news of the attempt on the King's life had spread over the entire city and, an impetuous

human torrent, Naples poured out its citizens, young and old, rich and poor, shouting, yelling, acclaiming again and again their King. In practically no time every union, every political party had assembled, and a huge endless procession, flags flying and drums beating, passed the palace.

Margherita was too pale, too exhausted from the strain to show herself; yet she knew she had to go out on the balcony, to smile, to thank all those people waiting and calling for her, and she **MUST NOT** show her people any sign of feminine weakness. A queen was a woman, but there were times when she could not show the simplicity of her nature, when she must remember that she was a queen and had no right to the privileges of women. What was she to do at that crucial moment? Put on some rouge to cover the pallor? But there was no rouge in the palace, as it was never used at the Italian Court. She rushed her maid to the kitchen to see if there was such a thing as a cooked beet. There were some freshly cooked ready for the evening meal. So with beet juice she, the Queen, coloured her cheeks.

An insignificant episode, no doubt, but it was much more significant than it seemed then, and much greater than the actual material act.

When at length Umberto and Margherita appeared on the wide balcony facing the square before the palace, a shout that echoed and re-echoed in every quarter of the city greeted them—a shout that seemed to come from the five hundred thousand inhabitants of Naples. Seven times the Royal anthem had to be repeated before the masses of humanity consented to depart and leave the Royal family to rest.

Umberto expressed only kindly pity for the man who

for some deluded idea had attempted his life, and on the night after the attempt, as well as later, he insisted upon saving him from the justice of the law. During the conference on the subject Margherita seemed calm, but the brightness of her expression was dimmed by a veil of profound melancholy.

"The poetry of the House of Savoia has been destroyed!" she exclaimed sadly, remembering that until that day no assassin's hand had ever been raised against a sovereign of her House.

The fulgent glory of the inviolability which her ancestors had felt in the fidelity and love of their subjects was obscured forever. Never again, Margherita believed, could she trust implicitly in the Italians' devotion for the House of Savoia. For as there had been one traitor in the city where they were the most beloved, so there must be others in Rome, and, in fact, in every part of their country, traitors lurking behind closed doors and high walls waiting to jump out at the King, or perhaps the little Prince. For herself she had no fear.

The King as well as the Queen had always taken their subjects' needs to heart, and no one had ever asked in vain for help. Not only did they see that the public funds were properly distributed, but also they used their private fortunes to help the truly deserving and needy. Their help was appreciated, and often the proverbial generosity was basely abused. No, there could have been no excuse for the savage act, no reason for anyone to desire the death of Umberto of Savoia, and nothing but an excess of political fanaticism could have been responsible for the happening at Naples.

On November 20th, Margherita celebrated her

birthday at Naples. In the square of the Royal palace from midnight until two o'clock in the morning the citizens gave her a touching and poetic proof of their passionate devotion. Over a thousand children from the age of five to twelve marched under the balcony of the Palace. Child after child they filed by, all dressed in white, many of them in their first Communion clothes. All of them were from the poor quarters of the city and various suburbs, carrying bunches of fresh flowers which they held high in their arms towards the Queen, to deposit them at her feet under the balcony on which the Royal family were all standing watching the infantile performance. One small child, more daring than the others, stood fascinated directly below the Queen, until rudely pushed by the child waiting to follow her, she raised the already faded bouquet to her lips, and before offering it, blew a kiss across the petals. Margherita smiled at them all, but tears, tender tears, were in her eyes as she caught the kiss wafted from the petals, and with an impulsive gesture sent a return kiss from the tips of her delicate fingers.

Under the balcony the flowers withered and died, but not all of them, for some were carried upstairs and carefully folded away in favourite books, little souvenirs of pure baby hearts which must someday be consecrated to Italy.

After various tedious trials during which his attorney had tried in vain to save him, using insanity as the grounds for his attempted assassination, Passanante appeared on March 7th before the Supreme Court. The greatest alienists in Italy had examined him, and all had given the same verdict; nervous but sane.

Ferocious and presumptuous he seemed pleased to appear as a political martyr, though he undoubtedly lacked the elementary culture necessary to a knowledge of the bare meaning of the word political, or what the political error was for which he desired to kill a perfectly good king who had a son, a brother, and three nephews ready to step into the sacred heritage of the throne.

Passanante was pronounced guilty of attempt to assassinate and condemned to death. Learning of this Margherita's heart had a beat of special pity, more for the unfortunate mother of the miserable criminal than for the man himself, and she at once asked for the sovereign grace of the most generous and kindly of men, the King, who had long before pardoned the man who would have killed him.

On March 20th, when informed that the Supreme Court had thrown aside every plea, King Umberto took his Royal right and changed the penalty of death to life imprisonment. Then, somehow feeling that that act was not sufficiently magnanimous he assigned a perpetual pension to the mother of Passanante.

Several other times during the next nine years there were attempts on the King's life, but he never did anything to revenge himself. And following the assassination of the Empress of Austria there was an international conference to provide for a social defence against the anarchists. The Foreign Minister, in recounting the projects to the King, tried to show him the necessity of re-establishing the penalty of death, at least for regicides. Umberto replied with words that were worthy of a Savoian, and of that particular Savoian: "You are right, Europe is right, but I have already passed through several attempts, and if to-day

I helped to put this through one would say that I did it from fear. I am a soldier; I am not afraid of threats, nor firearms. Do your duty, and when you have obtained from the two Parliamentary parties a law on this argument, I will know which law is mine. Until that moment I shall not bother myself about it."

Ever since Umberto came to the throne Sicily had been insisting upon a visit from Their Majesties. They on their part were anxious to see the noblest, and the most beautiful regions of Italy, for besides the affection that the Sicilians had for the House of Savoia there were the traditions and memories of the days when Vittorio Amedeo II ruled (from 1716 to 1729) the marvellous island. Then, too, several of the men who in 1848 offered the throne of Sicily to the Duke of Genova, Margherita's father, were still alive and longing to see the daughter of the man who had had the courage to refuse their crown.

Finally all plans were made for the trip, and it was settled that they were to leave Rome on January 3rd, 1881. The sea was rough, as often happens at that season of the year, and Admiral Acton, Commander of the battleship *Roma*, was advised by telegram that a tempest was raging on the sea between Naples and Palermo. He asked Their Majesties if despite the weather they wanted to cross.

In order to convince the King of the truth of his statement regarding the storm Admiral Acton was obliged to show him the telegram. Umberto was standing between the Queen and the young Prince of Naples, who was then twelve years old, and the Duke d'Aosta. He read the telegram, then passed it to the Queen, who read it and smilingly showed it to the Prince

then writing in pencil underneath the message: "Avanti Savoia" she again passed it to the Prince, who in turn gave it back to Admiral Acton.

Umberto was secretly pleased with the Queen's decision, and though the sea was really rough the Royal family with their suite embarked from Naples the evening of the 3rd and arrived at Palermo the following morning, a little worse for the bad crossing, but able to go through with the ceremonies arranged for them.

At the railway station of Messina, a lovely peasant girl dressed in the picturesque native costume, with black hair and sparkling eyes came close to the Queen, and with unaffected affectionate interest asked audibly: "*Dove il picciotto?*" (Where is the little one?)

Margherita understood that the comely peasant girl was speaking for most of the women present, and that they wanted to see their future king, so calling the Prince of Naples to her side she showed him to all those waiting outside the train. Proud of the honour of having the little Prince held up for her to see, clapping her hands furiously the girl began to shout the Royal anthem, then courageously she went close to the car window and reaching up took the Queen's hand in hers and kissed it. Her face wreathed in smiles, she cried: "*Evviva Santa Margherita!*" Only to a saint could the ignorant girl compare the sweet young mother so close to her.

And wherever a Santa Margherita is to be found in Italy to-day, from the beautiful little town on the Riviera Liguria to the most modest church, even though it may have existed long before Margherita of Savoia was born, to Italians Santa Margherita is their late beloved Queen Mother, and therefore church or town is a memorial to her.



H M UMBERTO I

In Sicily, as in every other place, the Royal visits were a round of continuous, vociferous, delirious demonstrations, from January 3rd to the 27th, when they returned to Rome at midnight to find the Square before the station packed with a multitude of people carrying torches and flags, who acclaiming them in the solemn silence of the night, accompanied the Royal carriage to the Quirinale.

During the last years of his life Vittorio Emanuele II had retired to a cordial friendship with his relatives of the Austrian reigning House, and with the Emperor Franz Joseph, whom he had visited at Vienna. Though he had been treated most cordially in the Austrian capital, his visit had never been officially returned.

Shortly after the death of Vittorio Emanuele the Italians began to show hostile sentiments towards Austria, sentiments that became always more hostile. And in order to keep peace it was deemed wise for the King and Queen to pay a visit to Vienna.

They were well received by the Emperor and Empress and every member of the Royal family of Austria, many of whom came from their far away homes to take part in the festivities planned for the Italian sovereigns. King Umberto was found to be a pleasant enough person, but the real success of the visit was due to Margherita, who made a personal conquest of Franz Joseph, as she had made of the Crown Prince of Germany, Carducci, and many others whose friendship was valuable to the House and Government.

The real political scope of the visit was fully reached when on May 20th, 1883, notwithstanding Bismarck's

lack of confidence, the Triple Alliance between Italy, Germany, and Austria-Hungary was signed.

This Triple Alliance lasted until 1914.

On June 2nd, 1882, a profound sadness fell upon all Italians in Italy, and in fact in every part of the world, when the news of Garibaldi's death was broadcast. On that day, June 2nd, on the romantic island of Caprera the greatest Italian of the nineteenth century breathed his last.

This news revived a tender memory in Margherita's heart of how in 1875, Garibaldi had asked the King, Vittorio Emanuele II, as a special favour to have him presented to her when he went to Rome, and how he had so visibly liked her simplicity, and the magnetic charm of her limpid blue eyes.

Even before seeing Garibaldi in the flesh, Margherita had admired his photographs, and all the stories she had learned of him as a child, of his rare valour, his sincere patriotism, and the adamant character of the man aroused her interest, and made her anxious to see and talk to him.

And when he came to Rome, later in 1875, he was received with every honour due to a liberator, and the Crown Prince was the first to call upon him. Garibaldi scarcely dared to express his wish of many years to see the Princess, and it was not until Umberto spoke of her desire to talk to him that he mentioned his conceptions of what the future Queen must be and the pleasure it would give him to have an audience.

He dressed in his very best clothes, rough old man and soldier that he was, and presented himself at the Quirinale. His was an intimate audience, and he was struck at once by Margherita's grace and modesty

before him, a man of quite another world from her own. He had expected to find her lovely of face and form, but he thought she mighty be haughty and conscious of her lofty position and qualities. And when she sat close to him, and listened to his words much as a little girl listens to her father, the grand old man was suddenly proud of her, not as a commoner might be proud of a Queen, but as a father is proud of his daughter. And thereafter he never lost an opportunity to speak of the exquisite femininity of Margherita's nature, and to point her out as one of Italy's proudest glories.

He believed in her as the future Queen, and as a woman, an example for all Italian wives and mothers and he always thought of her as an intimate friend, a beloved friend who could do no wrong.

How happy he would have been if he could have divined then how the Queen would have grieved for him as for the loss of a dearly loved friend, and that with her own hands she would select the flowers to be made into a wreath to rest on the foot of his coffin, beside that sent by the King.

Garibaldi was commemorated wherever there were Italians, and everywhere his memory was glorified and blessed. Of all the beautiful words written of the grand patriot, none were more beautiful than those of Carducci :

"The voice, that proud and gentle voice which at Varese and at Santa Maria shouted : '*Avanti, avanti sempre, figliuoli ! Avanti co' calci di' fucili !*' and from the rocks of the Trentino resounded the reply : 'We obey'—that voice is silent, lost in the infinity of space. The noble heart that never knew the meaning of the word despair no longer beats. Guiseppe

Garibaldi, Italy's Garibaldi is dead, struck down by the Supreme hand of Destiny. And still the sun shines on the Italian Alps that are no longer ours, on the sea that is no longer '*Mare Nostro*.'

"His strength and power have departed from us, nothing but his glory remains and the sublime complacency of having had him as a contemporary.

"His was one of those complex and richly gifted souls of the superhumanity, born for a certain destiny.

"In him the correction and purity of lineaments could be compared to those magnanimous Greeks who liberated their country from foreign and domestic tyranny at Milziade, at Trasibulo, at Timoleone, at Epaminonda; but the scarcity of facts of their part in the frays forbids us a complete paragon. Without doubt he could have been compared to the best Romans, if in him the human sense had not been deeper and kinder, if he had not had more of the chivalrous instinct of adventure, a real sign of a new and mystic race. And for his instinct of heroic adventure and firm devotion to ideals one could compare him to the knights and crusaders; to Guiscard, to Tancredi, if the cupidity of the conqueror was not entirely lacking, the sentiment of honour much higher and that of duty more illuminated. George Washington as a citizen would have been more his equal, but as an institutor of a republic he was happily grander, but the halo of heroism that encircles the brow of the Italian citizen does not surround the cold head of the Puritan General."

On, on through pages and pages telling the whole life story of the man Garibaldi, which is too much of a separate story to be included in this book, sufficient to know that Carducci's writings on the death of

Garibaldi were given to Margherita of Savoia, and treasured by her until her death.

Of all the great Italians who have lived in the past one hundred years, none were perhaps so great, or so greatly beloved, or their memories so respected.

Towards the end of 1883, the Crown Prince of Germany, Prince Frederick, went from Spain, where he had been visiting the King, to Italy to pass a few days with his dear friends Umberto and Margherita. At the time of his arrival in Rome with his wife, Princess Victoria, the old Emperor telegraphed :

“ You will kiss Queen Margherita’s hand, and I envy you ! ”

Yes, hers was a triumphant career, everywhere ; she was so beloved that, it is said, the grass upon which she walked, on the wide spreading lawns, seemed to caress her feet. Yet, years of sadness were being brought nearer to Italy, and to her—weak Government reins, a weak spot in some supposedly strong armour—tragedy to fall upon the country, a stain upon the House of Savoia.

CHAPTER IX

THE GOOD GODMOTHER

IN private life Margherita of Savoia was always considered as sort of a guardian angel of the home. As daughter, as sister, wife, mother, and friend, even the fiercest enemies of the monarchy were never able to find any defects in the feminine characteristics of which the august woman revealed so nearly a perfection. She was devoted to her family, docile, delicate in thought, faithful—and always affectionate. These were innate characteristics, but naturally highly developed by the culture she had been fortunate enough to receive.

As she respected the early education received from her own mother so did she want her son to respect his in after life. But she wanted his knowledge of all things to be even greater than her own. She herself selected practically all his teachers, tutors, and aids, making sure above all of their moral qualities. In questions of the heart she jealously reserved Vittorio Emanuele's instructions for her own high ideals.

Ruggero Bonghi and Marco Minghetti, with Professor Morandi and Colonel Osio were responsible for much of the present King's education. Often Margherita was present during her son's lessons, pretending to be severe and impartial, insisting that the teachers make the royal pupil work hard. Once she told

Mademoiselle Caucandier, his music teacher, that she must give him *una tiratina d'orecchi* (pull his ears) if by chance he did not pay proper attention.

During her frequent travels at home and abroad, Margherita always wanted her son near to point out to him, and to make him see with her appreciative eyes, the beauties of Nature ; she wanted him to grow up admiring the masterpieces of Italian genius—the art of Cæsar's time, the Renaissance, as well as that of her own time. On the other hand, with true maternal pride, she wanted to show him off to all the celebrating citizens of each city they visited.

Hers was a strange mother complex, and she should have had many sons on whom to shower her maternal love, for it was really too great for an only child. A boy needs more freedom than a girl, and that Margherita never realised. She saw no flaws in the educational system adopted by her own mother and never considered that a generation had changed many ideas of living, and that what had been good for her and her brother Tomaso, would not be good for her son. And confident of her judgment she never asked advice of anyone who might possibly have been wiser. Italian children are frequently spoiled ; Margherita had seen many examples of that, and she had no intention of having the future king self-willed or selfish.

Italian women are good mothers, but lenient. German women are good and severe. In her ideas on the bringing up of children Margherita of Savoja was completely Saxon, and by over-severity she lost a certain comprehension and tender abiding love that might otherwise have been hers.

Never in his life was Vittorio Emanuele lacking in outward devotion to his mother, never could the world

criticise him for any lack of respect towards the mother whom all Italians adored, but the intimate, understanding love that makes of a woman an idol to her son was not to be found in his heart. She never knew this until it was too late to change, until sentimentally he had grown as far away as a son ever can from a mother who lives constantly near him. She did not think that her severe principles were closing his heart to her, and that though he would always love her, always be devoted, it would be the love and devotion of duty, and not the big, spontaneous thing that time and distance can never change.

And yet she was a real mother to all those who asked for sympathy, to those who were helpless.

In 1887 she wrote to the Crown Prince, then nineteen years old, but, no doubt, still a child to her :

“Remember, my son, that before attaining to honour and fame, before acquiring the gifts that a man in your station can boast of, I want you to be a good-hearted man. Follow the example your father has given you, and you can never go wrong. Always be ready to help your fellow-creatures, as man, prince, and Christian.”

The kind, good father, whose example Vittorio Emanuele was to follow has long since gone to his rest, and the mother who so often used too strict a hand with her son in her desire to lead him aright, has also gone, but—this is a personal observation—Vittorio Emanuele III has nobly lived up to the examples set him in his early life. He is not known to the world at large as anything special in the way of a king, yet he is *VERY* special, and even in this year of grace, with a Dictatorship practically doing away with

the rights of a monarchy, he remains to his subjects, and they are HIS subjects, a King.

Among other things Margherita wished to inspire in her son a religious faith and respect for the Church in which he was born, so that he would appreciate religion as an essence of things that are, a force to aid in difficulties and suffering, instead of a mere form, a farce, as it is to many who are born in Catholic countries. And so from his earliest years Vittorio Emanuele was brought up to love God, the Patria, and being Italian, to consider with just pride the joy of being a part of a country which had dominated the world, and which through the work of its great men had reconquered its unity, and might therefore, in a future generation, be at the top of the world again.

Who will deny that it has made long strides towards that end?

While Margherita was tireless in her efforts to make of her son a real man and a worthy king, she still found time to undertake the education and development of many classes of Italians, and their chief interest was in the women.

Profoundly feminine herself she was still able to see and appreciate the power of the woman who had stepped out of her ordinary rôle of slave to the wiles of man. She appreciated the qualities of all Italian women, and she saw their defects as well. Educating the masses became a mania with her, for while intelligent enough as a race, the Italian women knew how to be mothers, and that was all. The business of having children was their only interest in life, and even the husband was subservient to the child. It was, she agreed, a noble interest, but it was not enough. Women must be taught to do more than sew on buttons,

mend socks, cook macaroni, and teach their children the alphabet, from which they never had time to graduate as each year brought a new addition to the family. In order to teach women something outside the home, and useful things for the home as well, there must be schools, special schools where they could learn some profession.

Italy was either very rich or very poor. The rich women were frequently lacking in culture, and the poor were frankly ignorant, often illiterate. Charity organisations there were without number, but charity was humiliating, therefore those organisations had to be changed into philanthropical institutions. And what did they learn in these charity organisations, even when they were not too proud to go to them? Nothing that they could not learn at home.

One by one the organisations were reorganised and became philanthropical and educational institutions, many of which owe their existence to the continual efforts of Margherita and Umberto. In fact, there are so many that it would take a volume to classify them.

Upon arriving at Rome as Crown Princess, Margherita began visiting the public asylums and all the vast array of charity organisations. Then her time began to be taken up by strenuous society duties, which she never neglected though they bored her, and the vain frivolity of the Roman aristocracy disgusted her. Society seemed to be nothing more than a continual association of thoughts of amusement and love intrigues which after all did not fill the needs of modern civilisation. But she was too wise to force her ideas on minds unwilling to change, so instead of beginning a propaganda for a general betterment of conditions,

she found a way, little by little, to inspire in the more serious and cultured women the thought of a useful social reform that would elevate women to be the equal of men (a very difficult task in Italy), and therefore bring about a generally good movement in the country.

If every day phonograph records could have been made of the conversations which took place in Margherita's salon, they would be a revelation to many, and would show that the emancipation of the Italian women, and to-day they are far, far in advance of their Latin sisters, is due to the efforts of Italy's first Queen, who so thoroughly took the question to heart, who from the period of Crown Princess to Queen Mother worked tirelessly towards the achievement, which, thanks to Mussolini's co-operation during her last years, has now become complete.

At official and private receptions alike, Margherita talked a great deal, passing from the most profound discussions to the lightest, most frivolous subjects with a facility that astonished her listeners. She interested herself in the families of her guests as though they had all been intimate friends, and she seemed to remember all she had ever been told about them, what they had done in the past, and what they were likely to do in the future. The women's clothes or jewels were frequently noticed and commented upon, and whenever anything struck her as particularly beautiful she frankly admired it. She who had good taste in dressing, and could have anything she might fancy, was always pleased to find good taste in others. She who had the most beautiful jewels of any woman at Court was anxious to show her admiration of what the others had.

At a diplomatic reception shortly before the war,

she was wandering about the lovely salon at the Margherita Palace chatting in a friendly way with one and all her guests. The American Ambassador at that time had a wife who was famous for her *faux pas*, and though she had been to many Court receptions, somehow she had never become accustomed to talking to royalty. During the reception Margherita had several times been on the point of addressing the American Ambassadors, but each time something had taken her to the other side of the long salon. At last she found her opportunity.

The Queen Mother's love of pearls was well known, and also she was believed to be a judge of them. She exchanged a few words with Mrs. D——, then said enthusiastically :

"What beautiful pearls you are wearing, Mrs. D——."

"Oh! Oh, thank you, Your Majesty!" Mrs. D—— replied a trifle embarrassed, "but these—these are only my travelling pearls."

"Indeed? And when do you wear your Court pearls?" Then Margherita passed on to another guest.

But one must not believe that Margherita was a woman whose every thought was given to the betterment of humanity in general, and women in particular, or the education of her son. She was strict but not puritanical. Though she was at the head of every movement for the advancement of women, and was responsible for women being permitted to lecture publicly, instead of merely reading sentimental poetry, as they had done until she took the question in hand, she had a great sense of humour, and delighted in hearing all sorts of clever stories, sometimes stories that

might have shocked less broad-minded women. The play on words of the clever French stories, even when a bit risqué, amused her, and often returning from Paris, where he usually lived, the famous unofficial diplomat, Count Primoli, passed a delightful hour recounting the latest French stories to Her Majesty.

After many committee meetings, many useless and useful discussions, it was decided that the women in Italy needed two things: A greater culture than the family and ordinary schools provided them, and a greater facility to usefully occupy their lives; but they wanted to remain thoroughly feminine; in other words, to have their full rights in the home and public life without wearing the trousers.

News came continually from the outside world of the advantages accorded to the women of other countries, of the suffragettes being arrested, of their determination to have the vote in both North America and England, and of how they would willingly be burned at the stake rather than give up their rights as women and the equals of man in public life. None of this touched the Italian women. They wanted an emancipation that would assure them their charm and the affectionate care of the family, in whom above all they had confidence, and who above all others must have confidence in them. And in order to fulfil this mission each woman felt that she needed the two things in which she was not wholly deficient, but of which it was essential that she have a more stable knowledge.

To fill the most pressing needs a professional school was founded in Rome, under the protection of Queen Margherita, who better than anyone had studied the question and understood what the school would stand for in the lives of many women.

Besides general sewing, embroidery, making of artificial flowers, Margherita insisted upon establishing a cooking school, and classes in domestic science in order to teach the working women how to properly care for their homes. This sounds rather unnecessary, as a woman should instinctively know how to care for her home. But many in Italy did not.

Learning in the school how to render the domestic surroundings agreeable to the men, the women who reigned there would be happy, and their children could grow up healthy and contented.

At Christmas and Easter the ritual sweets were, and still are, prepared by those already expert in these mysteries, and then sent to the various orphanages, and other public charity institutions where the poor children and the aged can enjoy the same goodies as the rich.

This same school, which is named after Italy's first Queen, has now become such a big organisation, and the work turned out so far superior to anything expected, that the most luxurious trousseaux are being made there, whereas, until fairly recently, all rich brides were forced to go to Paris for their household linens and fine lingerie. The work done by the Scuola Regina Margherita cannot be surpassed anywhere in the world.

Venice has always been considered as the city of beautiful laces, and the Venetian point is world renowned, but to-day Venetian point, and the most marvellously beautiful filet and Cluny laces are all being made in Rome at the Scuola Regina Margherita.

It seems that many years ago three points had been lost from the Venetian point lace, and that the mystery of those three stitches was unknown to modern lace

makers. Venetian point was one of Italy's real works of art, and without the three points the lace lacked beauty and antique value.

When Margherita learned of this seemingly un-repairable loss she determined to find those three points, and thus to preserve in all its rarity and loveliness the thing that was so essentially Italy's own. Word was sent to Venice and the surrounding towns that Queen Margherita was searching for a lace maker who knew the ancient Venetian point and had not lost the art of the intricate stitches. At last a very old woman was found at Chioggia and brought by the Queen's express orders to Rome to teach the lost stitches to the young women working in the school. And so the Venetian point lace made in Italy to-day is as perfect as that made a hundred or more years ago.

Thirty or more years ago Italian women, even if they had wished to have a college education, were not permitted to enter the Universities or schools of fine arts. There were no superior schools for women, and only two co-educational and those were high schools annexed to the University of Rome, and to the *Institute Superior* at Florence. Many of the great men of that time believed in a superior education for women, but alone, unaided, they could only make plans. At length, in order to get the movement on a sound footing the question was put to the Queen. Margherita's interest was at once aroused and she consented to accept the presidency of the promoting committee, selecting as patronesses the ladies of the highest Roman society. They met often at the Royal Palace, for she was an active president and very anxious to get the programme in working order. On January 26th, the Queen opened

the meeting with a charming speech which incited all those present to give their best efforts to the work of organisation.

Then there were the blind asylums to think of. There were many blind in Italy, and many asylums, but none of them instructed and educated the blind so that their lives might be less tragic. An eminent philanthropist, Domonico Martuscelli, in 1874, founded in Naples the institute for the young blind, asking Margherita of Savoia's permission to call it after Prince Vittorio Emanuele. Margherita was greatly flattered and pleased to have such a noble charity named after her son, and from the opening of the school she took a special interest in it and all the blind, visiting all similar institutions frequently. In 1888, at Padova, the Margherita of Savoia Home for the Blind was opened. Later a library for the blind was opened in Rome under the direct patronage of Her Majesty. To this the Queen donated a complete library of Braille books, renewing the supply from time to time.

The music school for the blind of both sexes was opened in 1868, but with the increased population this school soon became too small for the needs of the capital, and Margherita, who suffered from seeing so many blind who were uncared for, at length decided to found a similar school at her own expense. This school was situated at Terme Diocleziano, and was large enough to take in the blind from the Roman provinces as well as those of the city. Later she gave the inmates a fine piano and an organ. Very often she was there to assist at their musical afternoons, talking affectionately with those poor unfortunate beings who could only know her by her voice, who could



VITTORIO EMANUELE III
King of Italy

never see the kindly sympathetic light in the clear blue eyes, or note how her lips trembled with emotion when she saw how happy they were in their dark and quiet lives. The dark was terrifying to her, and the world so beautiful, that the thought of those who sit in darkness, those who had never seen the light was a most painful one, and had she been permitted she would have given her entire fortune to help them. Her greatest joy was to see the progress they were making in their music, to hear them talk with enthusiasm of some new accomplishment. Many of those students knew the loving touch of the gentle hand, and the harmony of her voice—a very special music to their trained ears, the voice of Margherita of Savoja who so assiduously cared for their comforts with gifts and kindly words.

With all her ideas of rigid etiquette among the people who attended her Court, when alone with those students she became as simple as one of their teachers, laughing and chatting intimately with them, the maternal instinct in her awakened to its full.

Another of the many noted institutions aided by Italy's first Queen was the orphanage of Santa Maria degli Angeli, founded in 1816. This institution was divided in two sections, masculine and feminine, and it took in the poor orphans to educate, instruct and to start them in whatever art or profession they seemed fitted for, and not until they were self-supporting were they left unaided.

Never, unless prevented by illness, did Margherita miss a meeting of her Professional Woman's School, nor those other institutes of which she was patroness. She was always present at any holiday feast given for charity and accepted all invitations to present

prizes or to speak at institutions in which she was interested. And they were legion. Never did she fail to help any efforts along the lines of advancement for women, acting upon all occasions as a sort of good godmother, helping to change misery into beauty, despair into hope. Only on the question of divorce was she adamant.

Marriage was a sacrament to her, a divine sacrament. The civil ceremony necessary in all Catholic countries, was a mere form of compliance with the civil laws, and had nothing to do with other than the law. She believed that a man and a woman were joined together by God, the ever-loving Father, and those whom He had joined together no man nor man-made laws could put asunder. Marriage was a sacred life compact, according to her religious principles, and one that should never be entered into lightly, for once God had permitted that mystic union of two human beings, even when the law agreed to separation, it could merely be a separation of bodies, leaving the souls joined together forever. Incompatibility was a mere word in marriage, for, so she insisted, when a woman promised to be the companion, friend, and obedient servant of a man she must remain that just so long as they both lived. The love of the flesh might change, that she understood as a natural physical law, but it had nothing to do with the spirit, and therefore it was not sufficient reason for separation and ultimate divorce.

Perhaps because of her religious principles, Margherita had no patience with men and women who continually complained of each other. If people were friends when they married they should be doubly so after having received the blessings of God and the Church,

and never did she listen to any woman's tale of woe, or consider that a husband's unfaithfulness was an excuse for a wife abandoning him.

There was a time during Umberto's reign when the question of divorce became a most serious discussion, and many lawyers had their papers filed ready to be brought up in the courts if the law was passed. The King was believed to be in favour of it, as many other Catholic countries had already accepted it as a necessary evil, and as a liberal way of preventing an over abundance of illegitimacy. Had it not been for Margherita's influence against it, it is thought that the law might have gone through. Of course, it could not have touched her personally, for a Queen would never have been divorced, but it was bad for the Church to have the State publicly sanction what the Church refused to acknowledge.

Margherita, like every other Queen from time immemorial, suffered from the infidelity of her consort. While the King's amorous attentions were outside the Court circles her pride as a woman was not wounded, but when he turned them to the Royal household, it was almost more than any self-respecting woman could bear, and least of all a Queen, who must hold her head high at all times and be an example of all womanly virtues at home and before the world.

Various ladies of the Court had received marked attention from King Umberto, but never had he attached himself very long to any one. What Margherita thought or said on the subject, nobody but the King, or perhaps the Marchesa di Villamarina ever knew, for she was too proud to discuss the matter, though she always knew when one affair had ended and another begun.

There were many, many caprices in Umberto's life, many that were common talk in Italy, for he never hesitated to keep the royal carriage waiting outside the house of his "light of love" for hours at a time, nor to show his particular fancy marked attention at Court functions. There were many caprices, but probably only one passionate love. For his wife and Queen, Umberto had a reverent, boundless love that nothing outside ever changed, and he was intensely proud of her, recognising and acknowledging her exceptional qualities as Queen, wife, and mother. Never did he neglect her for his other love, a love of the flesh, yet day after day his carriage, with the Royal guards close at hand, waited for him outside X——'s palace, often until some official function called him to duty—and that duty might be to open an art exposition, receive the visit of some foreign dignitary, or to take a drive in the Pincio with his Queen, whom he would meet smilingly, proud and happy to be with her, to have the Italians see them together. Whatever he had promised to do he did, regardless of his personal desires.

Margherita had early acquired the habit of driving in the Pincio every afternoon, usually at the sunset hour, and often it was her pleasure to sit beside the King in a phaeton drawn by four horses, which Umberto drove so well. To the Romans, and even more so to the foreigners, it was a pleasing sight to see the red-uniformed guards preceding the Royal phaeton, to see the King driving and to wait for Margherita's smile. The guards advanced at a trot, and the crowds waiting to see the Royal carriage pass, foreigners and Italians alike, would cry :

"There she is ! There's the Queen !" And she

would smile complacently at them all, radiant, as though her heart was filled with joy, when often it was heavy with the weight of jealousy and an unexpressed fear of the day when she must ride alone.

She was unforgettably lovely in her simple elegance, and the King, everyone agreed, had reason to be proud of her, as Italy was, and must ever be.

X—— was a lady-in-waiting to the Queen, but from the time that she became a Royal mistress, while for the eyes of the world remaining on the official Court list, she was never again called to active service.

The Countess Somaglia, one of the great Roman society leaders of her day, gave a most important ball to which all the Ambassadors with their suites, the highest Roman aristocracy, and visiting Royalty were invited. The King and the Queen had promised to attend, but they were not expected until late. For some unknown reason, some purely feminine intuition, Margherita decided to go to the ball a little earlier than had been arranged. When she entered the crowded ballroom at the Countess Somaglia's on the arm of the King, there was a moment of strained silence. The hostess came forward to greet Their Majesties, and managed to stand in front of the Queen, but after the greetings were over Umberto walked away and Margherita came face to face with X——. X—— had had the decency to endeavour to hide behind a screen near the door when the King and Queen were announced, but before she could withdraw they had entered the room and the Countess Somaglia was standing in front of the Queen and thus hiding her. When Margherita found herself facing X—— she looked coldly into her eyes, a faintly sarcastic smile hovering about the sweet mouth, then she bowed deeply.

Confused, X—— returned the bow. Everyone was much embarrassed, while Margherita, apparently quite unconcerned, more than ever the Queen, passed smilingly through the long room. Both the Queen and X—— were wearing their pearls, gifts from the King.

Gifted with a prodigious memory for things, physiognomies, voices, dates, readings, and places, Margherita had in her exquisite woman's sensitiveness a superior sense of divination that consisted in knowing exactly what to say to each and every person, a something that endeared her to all. She was delicate with everyone, extremely tactful, and yet she managed not to talk of herself.

She felt a very deep love of family and friendship, and she was always grateful, in fact her gratitude was sometimes exaggerated, considering her exalted position. She offered protection to all the members of the House, even those who had entered through morganatic marriages. She interested herself in, and encouraged her enterprising and studious nephew, Luigi, Duke degli Abruzzi, just, as much later, she showed a great interest in the fishing expedition of the Prince of Udine. The dethroned Queen of Portugal, Maria Pia, her sister-in-law, she had live with her, lovingly caring for her until she died. And her former governess, who had married the Baron de Carne, she remembered with sincere affection, often having her as a guest at the Royal palace and when infirm and confined to her home at Siena, she went there many times to see her.

At one time the Royal family was complete at the Quirinale, even Maria Clothilde who, for love of her brother, had overcome her reluctance to come to Rome,

which in her pious soul she still felt had been usurped from the Pope, was there on a visit.

It is interesting to know how her husband, Prince Bonaparte, finally permitted her to go to Rome, on the condition that she would not take any luggage, and how, being an Italian, and therefore an obedient wife, she obeyed his instructions. She came without apparent luggage, but there was something strange in her appearance. King Umberto recounted gaily at a dinner, how, so as not to appear badly dressed amidst the elegance of the Italian Court, and at the same time not to disobey her husband, his sister had carefully put four evening dresses on, one on top of the other.

Wherever there were natural disasters, there was kind, good Umberto to be found. During the terrific floods of Verona (1883), he arrived in the devastated city to encourage the difficult and dangerous rescue work by his presence. In 1883 he was among the first to reach Casamiciola, which had been destroyed by earthquake, and long before the shocks had definitely ended and the danger passed, he was with the rescuers working among the frightened citizens.

1884 was the year of the terrible cholera epidemic at Naples, one of the most terrible epidemics Italy had ever known. Umberto was resting at Monza, in the lovely villa with his wife and son, and he was expected at Pordenone, in the extreme north of Italy, where great festivities were being prepared in his honour and that of the army which was to arrive after the grand manœuvres. Word came to Monza that the pest had doubled in vigour, and that hundreds were dying daily.

Everything was ready for the King's departure for Pordenone, when his aid read the despatch from Naples.

"At Pordenone they are feasting, and at Naples they are dying," Umberto said to his aid. "I shall go to Naples." And he left immediately, for the stricken city.

En route he was joined by his brother Amedeo, Duke d'Aosta, who, knowing that the King had left for Naples, wanted at any cost to accompany him, and to share his dangers and sacrifices. The simplicity and haste with which the King and the Duke d'Aosta arrived at Naples in that terrible moment, made a great impression on all Italy, and even the international Press praised the King and the Duke of the House of Savoia.

There had been seven thousand cases of cholera, with three thousand five hundred deaths in a few days, and fearing the infection, the city authorities begged the Royal brothers to retire to the magnificent palace of Capodimonte, that, surrounded as it was by woods, was far enough away from the infected air of the city. But the King and the Duke had not gone to Naples for the pure air at the Capodimonte palace, but to more easily watch over the sick in the hospitals, and to make sure that all were being cared for.

In order to avoid the contagion of the epidemic those who could afford to left Naples at that time, but on hearing that the King and the Duke d'Aosta were visiting the stricken in the lowest quarters, squadrons of volunteers were organised to succour and help all who needed care, trying to outdo each other in following the example given by the King.

Without taking the slightest precautions, while

those who were near them insisted in vain that they use at least a disinfectant, Umberto and Amedeo passed among the sick and dying.

None of the hospitals, none of the most lurid quarters of the city, where the dying were lying on straw in the streets, were deprived of the comfort of their visits, and of their prompt and efficient aid. Money was needed for medicines, for food, for clothing, and bedding; unhesitatingly Umberto supplied the need. In one day he opened his private purse to the amount of 300,000 lire so as to be sure that the poor victims were decently buried, instead of being thrown into the common lurid pit.

From every part of Europe, from every crowned head, telegrams of admiration and good wishes came to the King. And every day at least three messages were sent by Margherita, whose one regret was that she was not permitted by the King to be there with him.

Among a number of telegrams received on a certain morning there was one from the Queen. Umberto held it unopened in his hand, looking at it thoughtfully. "This," he said softly, "I feel is from the Queen."

"Your Majesty," one of his aids ventured, "Her Majesty the Queen is quite right to fear for Your Majesty's health. Go back to Rome. Already you have been in Naples two weeks, and that is much, much more than the people expect of you."

The King slowly tore open the yellow paper. His face was suddenly illuminated. Handing the slip of paper to his aid, he said: "Read this." The aid read aloud for the benefit of those present: "I and the Crown Prince are proud to possess such a husband and such a father. Divine Providence is with you. May He who

watches over all our destinies, protect you from harm."

There was a moment's silence, then Umberto smiled and said almost gaily: "You have all heard? But, gentlemen, our duty is not to stay here and discuss telegrams and the weather. Which hospital do we visit first?" And they departed for the Maddalena Hospital, the biggest in Naples, where several hundred souls died each day.

There in that dreadful house filled with the most dreaded of all diseases, where valiant doctors and nurses worked day and night without resting, Umberto, Italy's King, did not hesitate to throw aside his gloves, so as to be able to hold more tenderly in his regal hand the weakened, fevered hands of the dying poor. And many there were who slipped "over the border" with a sense of security, because he who had been their guide, their King, on earth, was leading them by the hand. Many there were whose eyes closed in death to the sound of his voice ringing in their ears, his intense prayer for their "safe crossing" and happiness in another world the last words they heard.

The return of the Royal brothers to Rome, according to the King's orders, was to be a quiet event, but even the Mayor of Rome was unable to prevent a crowd from gathering at the railway station. When the King got down from the train, one of the first to shake his hand was a young priest, who exclaimed enthusiastically: "*Evviva il Padre del Popolo!*" (Long live the Father of the People!)

The King and the Duke d'Aosta were literally carried by the delirious shouting crowd to their carriage, while the Mayor of Rome had difficulty in keeping near

enough to the King to tell him of the capital's gratitude. Nothing so impressed the Italian people as to have the proof of the Sovereign's affectionate personal interest in public calamities, because, in the past, it so rarely happened.

And the great popularity of the House of Savoia is due to this very personal interest of the King, Queen Margherita, and the Royal Princes and Princesses, who never failed to share the joys and sorrows of the people, or to give examples of their love for the country, that has nothing in common with official visits, beautiful speeches and gifts of money, which in other ages the Sovereigns and the grand "signori" believed showed that they had sufficiently honoured and aided their subjects and vassals.

Some months after the epidemic had passed, the city of Naples offered two gold medals as an appreciation to the men who had done the most to relieve the suffering city. The first medal was awarded to King Umberto who had so generously, fearlessly, risked his life in an effort to comfort the very least among his subjects, and the second was given to the noble Professor Teodosio de Bonis, a valiant young doctor, who, from the breaking out of the epidemic until the end, scarcely ate or rested, and thanks to whose efforts and knowledge of the dread disease, many hundreds of lives were saved.

On April 14th, 1883, the beloved brother of the Queen, Prince Tomaso, Duke of Genova, married Princess Isabella of Bavaria. Prince Tomaso had grown into a quiet reserved man, kindly of face and gentle of manner, while his bride was a forceful personality, with the German love of home and family. Margherita

took the Princess Isabella to her heart as a sister, and with her mother, the King, and all the Princes of Savoia, joyously assisted at the auspicious marriage.

Margherita of Savoia was the first Queen of Italy who knew how to demonstrate an intelligent depth of conscience for the social duties of a modern sovereign in an epoch in which the democratic conception is undergoing a rapid evolution.

With a reputation for simplicity and courteousness, which she always lived up to, at the same time Margherita would never tolerate a lack of tact or of regard for conventions, and least of all anything savouring of familiarity.

To a foreign woman, wife of a diplomat, who for some unknown reason believed herself on terms of intimacy, and so asked gaily : " Is your husband out hunting to-day ? " and gently tapped the Queen on the arm, Margherita replied with a frigid smile that probably cut deeper than her words :

" If you mean to ask news of His Majesty the King, I will tell you that in fact he is hunting to-day."

Oh, yes, she had a very polite way of reproofing the slightest lack of proper etiquette, even among her most intimate friends, who, being human, sometimes had the misfortune to forget themselves when sitting or talking with her.

During one of her many intimate visits at the Quirinale and at the Margherita palace, the Signorina Regis was sitting on a small sofa beside the Queen ; there were two cushions against the back of the sofa. The Queen was sitting very straight, talking with animation on a subject that was of intense interest to them both. Following the Royal example, as she was obliged to do, the Signorina Regis was also sitting

very straight. Both were turned slightly sideways so that they could see each other. The Signorina Regis says she does not know why she did it, but in a distracted moment she somehow leaned one shoulder against a cushion. The Queen said nothing, but she gave her friend a soverely reproving glance, that though it was many years ago, she has never forgotten. Shortly after she was ushered out of the palace. She was a frequent visitor at Court, but it was long before the affront was overlooked sufficiently for her to be received in private audience.

Margherita was a great lover of animals, and she was an intrepid horse-woman, riding whenever it was possible for hours through the woods, over mountain paths and through the verdant valleys. And above all she loved hunting, and at one time she was unofficially Mistress of the Hounds. She was among the first women in Italy to ride a bicycle, and also to travel in an automobile.

When seaplanes came into use Margherita insisted, against the wishes of her son, in taking a short flight over the Bay of Naples. An airship was the next experience in the air, and had it not been absolutely forbidden for a pilot to take Her Majesty up, she would most certainly have flown over Rome in an aeroplane.

She was ever searching for new sensations, and she searched until the very end. A great lover of progress, she was ready to encourage and favour every Italian industry.

In May 1888, the King and Queen again went to Bologna for the inauguration of a National Art Exhibition, in which the industrial productions of the provinces predominated. The province of Emilia is populated by industrious, active, civil, cultured and

liberal people. Also, Bologna boasts of the oldest University in Italy, and in 1888 it celebrated its eighth centennial, with the visit of scientists from every part of the world.

The University of Bologna besides being the oldest University in Italy is perhaps the most progressive, as there were women teachers there at a time when in other parts of Italy the women were very little, if at all, educated. And, too, Bologna is the Italian city where the intellectual society is largely composed of cultured women who still enjoy the conversational spirit that recalls the aristocratic and artistic salons of the fifteenth century.

Bologna so seldom figures on the tourist's itinerary, and yet it is a city of a singular charm and indescribable fascination because the antique character has always been preserved, and the centre of the city never disfigured by vulgar modern buildings. The principal square retains its ancient beauty, one side being entirely occupied by the monumental Church of Saint Petronio, and close by the magnificent fountain of Giambologna remains intact.

Those who have never seen the procession of the Madonna of Saint Luca, which is brought down from Monte della Guardia the Saturday before Ascension each year, cannot possibly imagine the originality of the spectacle. In 1888, the Royal family, with the local authorities and the Prime Minister, then the famous Francesco Crispi, were on the balcony of the City Hall. The vast Square seemed to be covered by a thick carpet of human heads, above which, from a corner appeared the ancient sacred baldachin, with its magnificent gold embroideries, and under it the Byzantine painting representing the Madonna.

For that occasion Queen Margherita was dressed in white, and the Bolognese always recalled her as an angelic vision when, as the baldachin passed under the balcony of the City Hall, they saw her kneel and bow her head, while the King, the Crown Prince and the authorities reverently saluted.

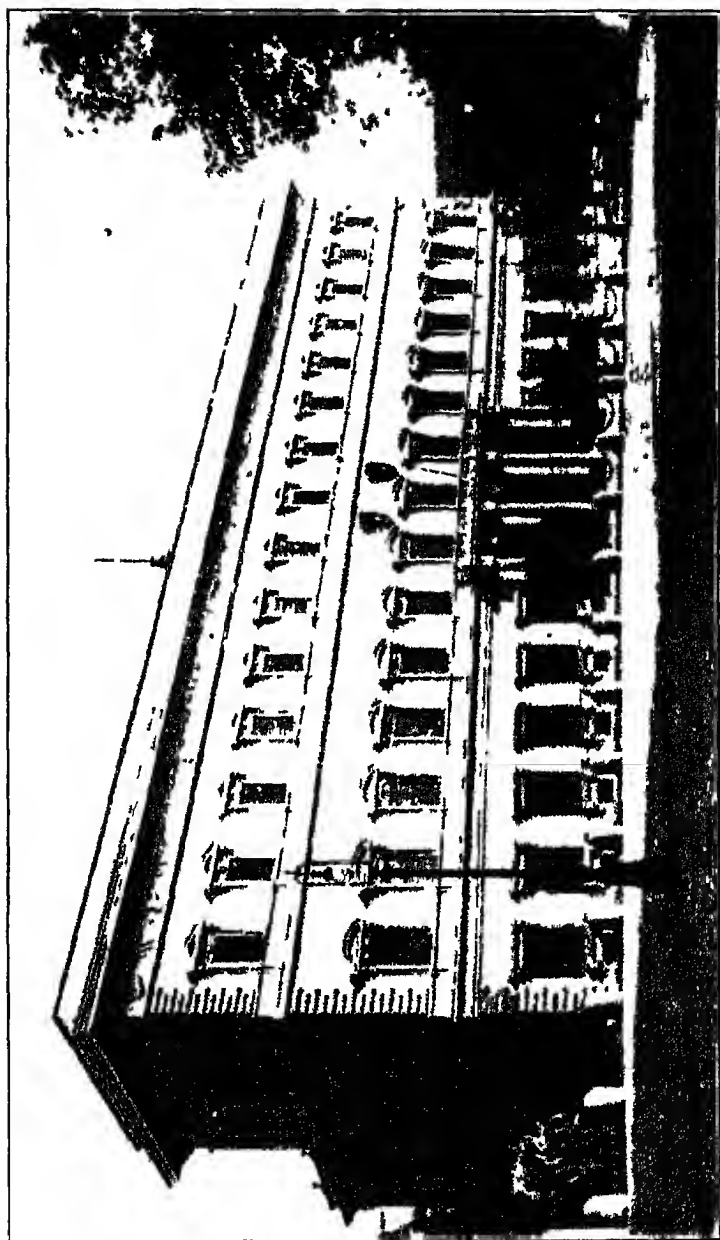
The Provinces of Romagna were selected for the grand manœuvres in 1888, in order to give the King an opportunity to pay a long delayed visit to the important cities of the Province. But all of the Romagna hated the monarchy, and everyone, even to his devoted sister, the Queen of Portugal, was against the King's going there.

To suggest to Umberto that it was unwise, and perhaps even dangerous to go to a place, was to make him go there, and so, as soon as he was warned against Romagna, he decided that he must go there in order to show his faith in the people, and to give them an even greater proof of that faith, he took the Prince of Naples, the only son in whom all the affection of the Royal family was concentrated along with the hope of the dynasty. This frank, noble firmness delighted the few loyal Romagnans who followed the King and Prince on their travels, and who saw them taking information concerning the local needs, shaking hands in a friendly way with all who approached them, until even the proudest republicans could not withhold their enthusiasm. They had been led to believe that the King would visit Romagna at the head of forty thousand bayonets, and Umberto of Savoy belied that report by visiting every city after the troops had departed. Ugo Pesci wrote that he knew that on occasions many men who boasted of half a century of

solid republican principles, who had suffered prison, exile, and often risked their lives, inwardly fought their political faith and the desire to pay homage to SUCH a King. Being men of honest and good faith, the second sentiment prevailed ; then old prejudices were repudiated and the majority were convinced that such a monarchy as theirs was better than the best republic. The beautiful and proud Romagna women, who were always kept away from all political questions, which in their part of Italy meant conspiracies, heard that they were to be allowed to acclaim an Italian and liberal King, and to take part in the cordial manifestations. The ice once broken, the entire province, so suspected of rebellion, in those days showed itself as loyal and faithful to Umberto as his own Piemonte.

On August 28th, Umberto arrived at Forlì, the city that later was to be made famous as the early home of Mussolini, and the following morning he set out to see the Poor House, founded in memory of his father, Vittorio Emanuele II. Then he went to inspect the workmen's homes. First he went into an unfinished house, stopping to console a poor man who had lost an arm in a building accident, then he asked permission to enter one of the little houses already being lived in. A socialist was the owner of the house, but he was absent at that moment. However, his wife was standing in the doorway. The King asked her permission to see the house, saying that he never infringed on the rights of others. The good woman replied unhesitatingly in dialect : "*Sì figuri, un gentiluomo come Lìe ! Favortsca. . .*" (Naturally, a gentleman like you ! Come in.)

And she accompanied the King into the poor, but



MARGHERITA PALACE

clean little house, showing him every corner, and without the slightest malice, calling his attention to the photographs of various recently condemned rebels.

In another house he found the little stairway and the entrance prettily decorated with flowers and the women greeted him joyously, while the men shouted and clapped.

Rimini, the enchanting sea-coast city in which the souvenirs of the tragedy of "Francesca" still live, was the next place to be visited. He found that the fishermen had not been advised of his arrival, and so none of them had yet returned from the night's fishing. But the women found the banners of the fishermen's society, and arranging themselves in lines of four, from the oldest to the youngest, they marched past their King, volubly showing their regret that the Queen was not with him. A fisherman's daughter, a pretty little girl stepped up to the King, and encouraged by his kindly smile, gently touched his arm, and said in dialect: "We all want to see the Queen!"

Everywhere King Umberto went the same desire was expressed, because everywhere in Italy Queen Margherita was dearly loved, and more than the wife of a King, she was as a Queen in her own right.

In order to please the people of Romagna, on September 14th, Umberto invited Margherita to join him at Forli, after he and the Crown Prince had been to visit Dante's tomb at Ravenna, and to inaugurate the monument to the martyrs of Libia, in the Piazza Anita Garibaldi, so called in honour of the adored wife of the grand General.

The Queen excited a real fanaticism among the people of the Romagna, when with the King she visited the schools and colleges.

On May 1st (Labour Day in Italy) 1890, was a turbid day of general strike, when numerous of the undesirable lower working-classes had planned to blow up the gas works of Rome, the act being scheduled for the exact hour that Queen Margherita was in the habit of taking her afternoon drive in the Pincio. Word came to Her Majesty of the probable explosion.

"It is imprudent for Her Majesty to go out to-day," was murmured about in the Palace during the afternoon. "The Queen is respectfully begged to renounce her drive this afternoon," was the message that was sent to Margherita just as she was ready to leave her private apartment. The carriage was in the court below, the coachman awaiting her orders, no doubt hoping that she would for once be cautious enough to remain indoors on a nefarious day, and thus assure his safety as well as that of her sacred person.

But she who had for her motto: "*Avanti, sempre avanti Savoia*" was not afraid of her own subjects, and she wanted to show it. Tranquil, in the open carriage, the red liveries of the coachman and groom literally calling for the attention of the strikers, Queen Margherita went out of the Quirinale court, drove through the long street, called the Corso, and passed the many glorious old palaces with glimpses of beautifully kept gardens showing through the open doors or grilles that line the way, smiled and bowed to the hundreds of pedestrians who stared at her with admiration, crossed the quaint Piazza del Popolo, and drove up the winding drive to the Pincio. There the carriage stopped for many minutes to enable her to contemplate the sunset, to watch the last rays glittering on the spire of St. Peter's. When the clouds in the sky had turned to pink and mauve she gave the order to drive

on slowly, so that she might admire the spring flowers in the neatly arranged beds outlining the wide avenues of Rome's wonderful park.

Yes, it had been a turbid day, but nothing serious had happened, the gas works had not been blown up, and nobody had been killed in a fight, while calm and beautiful Margherita of Savoia had shown her faith in the Italian people, in the class that was believed to be against her as a member of a Royal house, but certainly not as a woman. And the fact that she had been permitted to pass freely, undisturbed on her way proved that her faith had not been misplaced.

At dinner that evening the question of her having gone out again came up. "I may have been imprudent," she said, "but I know that while my people may sometimes be momentarily troubled and deluded by a few unprincipled men, they are nevertheless enthusiastic and easily led by the right example. Could they have done anything to harm me when they saw how implicitly I trusted them? No, for underneath they are good, and are really the grandest people in the world and history will prove that I am right."

In 1888, Amedeo of Savoia, who had been a widower for some years, married the lovely Princess Letizia, daughter of Gerolamo Napoleon and Maria Clothilde of Savoia. There was one son by this marriage, Count di Salemi.

Two years later, Prince Amedeo, Duke d'Aosta, died. In due time his widow, a cultured and vivacious woman, became the soul of every intellectual and charity event in Turin, and her beautiful palace was the scene of the most brilliant society events given in the city since the Court had moved to Rome.

Prince Amedeo's death was a great sorrow to Umberto and Margherita, for he had been a good brother and brother-in-law, a help to the King and a gentle adviser to the Queen. When word came of his illness Their Majesties hurried to Turin, and were both with him during his last hours. The following year Prince Gerolamo died, and again Margherita went to Turin to be for a short time with her sister-in-law, the saddened Princess Clothilde, who perhaps had not cared much for her disagreeable husband, yet when he was gone she consecrated herself to prayer and charitable works, retiring and living alone in her castle at Moncalieri.

On May 11th, 1891, Marchese Emanuele di Villamarina, Margherita's Gentleman of Honour, and husband of her devoted lady-in-waiting, passed away. The loss of this gallant gentleman, a real gentleman of the old school, was a great grief to all the Court, and somehow brought the Marchesa Paola di Villamarina closer to everyone in the Court circles.

The silver wedding anniversary of Umberto and Margherita of Savoia was celebrated in Rome with true medieval splendour, with representatives of every reigning family present, as well as the Emperor and Empress of Germany personally attending. In the chronicles of the House of Savoia one finds a lengthy account of the remarkable tournament held at Rome on April 22nd, 1893, in the vast Piazza di Siena, in the Villa Borghese :

"Thousands of people occupied the richly decorated grandstands and steps of the amphitheatre, while in the special magnificently decorated stands the Royal

family with their Imperial and Royal guests took part in the fantastic invocation of the Middle Ages.

"It was a clear, limpid, spring day, such a day as one sees only at Rome, when the sky is so intensely blue and the air so vaporous as to make one feel the possibility of rising above the clouds of human misery enveloping the earth into the ethereal regions of absolute beauty and perfect peace.

"The Herald declared the stakes open, and the trumpets with festive notes saluted the entry into the field of the procession of cavaliers, who in well-trained squadrons, filed past the Royal tribunes in perfect order. The King of Saxony passed slowly on horseback, his passage perhaps recalling to Margherita of Savoy the origin of her mother's family; he was followed by vivacious, brilliant, Italian cavaliers in the uniform of the tenth century, with the imperial eagle embroidered on their breast; they were surrounded by pages, by halberdiers with their many coloured standards and by men of arms.

"After these came thirty-two cavaliers in the beautiful twelfth century costumes with the white cross on a red ground on their breasts, while the same number wore costumes of the fourteenth century, with the golden trefoil cross, emblem of the ancient order of San Maurice. Followed by grenadiers on horseback, by pages and those who carried the banners of Savoy, Piemonte, and Sargagna, dressed in the richest costumes of the periods from 1450—1750, proudly marched the arquebusiers, halberdiers, men of every species of arms. The cavaliers of the fifteenth century who had a marguerite as emblems in memory of the marriage of Margherita of Valois with Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy, received a special bow and

captivating smile from the Queen of Italy. But the heart of Margherita of Savoia was brought back to the present with an extra beat of exaltation when her own beloved son appeared on the field riding proudly in a superb mantle of dark red velvet, the costume of Grand Master of the Supreme Order of the Santa Annunziata. The Crown Prince was then twenty-four years old, and he was very handsome in the magnificent attire. He bowed gallantly before the Royal tribune, exchanging glances with the august mother, who no doubt felt a new pride in seeing him in the imposing costume. The maternal love showed in the splendour of her tear-filled eyes, for Margherita of Savoia had never learned to completely conceal any emotion. And she was continually moved during the procession of distinguished warriors of other days represented by her nephews, the Duke d'Aosta, the Count of Turin, and the Duke degli Abruzzi, who were respectively Umberto Biancamano, Vittorio Amedeo II, and Vittorio Amedeo III, proudly recalling to the minds of all present those daring princes of the House of Savoia. The Queen seemed to think with mystic regret of the father of these splendid young men, the good and kind Prince Amedeo, who twenty-five years before had organised a similar tournament at Turin and at Florence. The other tournament was historical while this one for the Silver Wedding Anniversary was purely symbolic and represented the unity of Italy computed by the Dynasty of Savoia: Two halberdiers, followed by lictors carrying two banners, one with the wolf and the other with the Roman eagle, while one hundred men in striking medieval costumes held high and gaily flying in the sun, the banners of one hundred Italian cities."

The celebrations continued from April 21st to the 30th, in Rome, Naples, Pompei, and Spezia, celebrations more splendid than one can easily imagine in modern times. The most stupenduous, owing to the wonder of the surroundings, was that at Pompei, where Queen Margherita and the Empress Victoria of Germany, went about the strange city in sedans, bringing to mind the fascinating women of those bygone days, in pose and dress so much more æsthetic than the direct antithesis—the modern apparel.

Margherita of Savoia had been married twenty-five years, and as marriages go, hers was considered a happy one, yet, how replete with suffering it had been, suffering in the midst of worldly glory and unprecedented personal success, a suffering that the world never guessed from the tranquil, smiling exterior. But did not her understanding of the suffering of others tell its own story?

CHAPTER X

WIDOW

VOLUMES have been written, and hundreds of people, perhaps millions, have talked of the intelligence of Margherita of Savoia, until the brilliance and activity of her mind have become almost legendary. It is true that she was gifted with an open mind, was cultured in the fullest sense of the word, well read, and of an exquisite natural taste. But hers was not by any means a super-intelligence, merely was it slightly above the average Italian woman's, and therefore reputed to be phenomenal. More than intelligence she had a super-memory.

The Countess Elena della Rocca compares the Queen's intelligence and activity to a prism of purest crystal with infinite sides. And, as the Countess della Rocca practically grew up with Margherita of Savoia she should have known her as well as anyone could, yet many others who saw her continually as Crown Princess, Queen, and Queen Mother, say that while often witty, and certainly profoundly interesting when talking on important subjects, she was not infrequently monotonous in general conversation, and when annoyed or nervous had a habit of constantly repeating. More than a rare intelligence, Margherita had a rarely kind heart, and she sincerely occupied herself with competence and love in anything that

she felt might bring joy or happiness to those near and dear to her, and that meant everyone, even to the humblest of her subjects.

What personality in any field of thought did she not know? What monument or exposition did she not visit? What national manifestation did she neglect? What worthwhile book, in her own or a foreign language did she not read? What scientist was not astonished by her acute, original personal observations? What good work did she not encourage and help? What anguished heart knocked in vain at the door of her heart? What suffering did she not understand? What offence did she fail to pardon?

She paid attention to the form as well as the substance of things, believing that it was her duty as a Royal personage to be punctilious about everything pertaining to social and public life. All letters and telegrams addressed to her were answered personally; congratulations, good wishes or condolences, it was always the same, though often they were signed by a lady-in-waiting, or a gentleman of the Court; they were actually written or dictated by her, and in the wording recognisable among thousands, there was the unmistakable imprint of her thoughts.

She introduced the fashion of giving concerts at Court, calling the most celebrated musicians of her day, and studying their programmes with them. She founded the Society of the *Quartetto*, of which Sgambati was the director. She gave sumptuous balls, and always took part in the quadrille of honour on the arm of the dean of the Ambassadors. She was tireless in planning all sorts of novel garden-parties with special illuminations, and she went to many private balls, even to masked balls, where she remained

incognito during an entire evening. All holidays and the Saints' days of the family were celebrated with a particular splendour, so characteristic of her personal love of beauty and luxury.

She was prodigal in her expenditure of self, tireless in her efforts to please, and she seemed to belong to all, and to be everywhere, as the age and her station demanded. It was one of her duties to show herself frequently in public, to receive many people, and to retain a constant contact with the people by means of the charity organisations, as well as visits to institutions, thus bringing all classes nearer to the throne.

In the midst of the busy life of the still young Italy came the horrors of the war in Africa, a very necessary war, from many points of view, and that lasted during a period of ten years, costing the country many lives and large sums of money.

Many of the serious political men of the time absolutely disapproved of the African-colonising, but they did not dare to speak frankly to the King, because unfortunately the die had been cast.

The truth was that the idea of a colony in Africa had never been seriously studied. Italy had been dragged into a complex series of events which originated from the concession made to the Italian Government by the coaling station of the Rubattino Navigation Company, at the Bay of Asset.

When the Italian Government made this arrangement in 1880, the directors had no intention to annex or expand in those parts, and it was only in 1885 that by the need of colonies for the numerous emigrants that Italy was forced to think of a Colonial organisation. There was an accord with England, then

preparing to conquer the Sudan, and Italian soldiers were sent to occupy Massaua. The helping of the English turned out rather disastrously for the Italians, as for the surrender of Khartum and the victory of Mahdi they were sent to establish friendly relations with Jihra, the Negus of Abyssinia, which would have enabled them to get the commerce from the interior to the port of Massaua. However they did not succeed in propitiating the suspicious Prince.

While the Italians kept to the outskirts of Massaua, in Egyptian territory, happily given up to Turkey, thanks to the English intervention the Negus did not act hostilely, but when they occupied Saati, on Abyssinian soil, Ras Alula declared the state of war. Then with an enormous Army Ras Alula went to Dogale where he surprised and surrounded a group of five hundred Italians, who after eight hours of heroic combat, in which they used all their ammunition and killed a number of the enemy, were miserably massacred. Then to vindicate her dead as well as to defend the acquired rights down there, Italy had to send troops. The value of such a task for the still young nation was not approved by the greater part of the Italians, who were unprepared to judge of the importance of the question; and therefore considered the sending of troops such a distance, and the enormous sacrifice of life that it would entail as bitterly useless. Notwithstanding, both sides prepared for war. Having delayed for a favourable time, in January 1888, the Negus, with a big army, marched on the fortress occupied by the Italian troops, but being afraid to attack, he finally retired.

While the Negus was facing the Italian troops under General San Marzano, he was being menaced on the

side by the doubtful conduct of Menelik, King of the Scioa, and by an invasion of the Dervishes who had passed the confines of Eutopia. The Negus retreated to defend his country, and turned against the Dervishes, thus doubling the punishment of the unfaithful Menelik ; he died on the battlefield in March 1889.

There were many pretenders to the throne of Abyssinia, and for some time the country was the victim of a civil war.

Francesco Crispi was then Prime Minister in Italy, having succeeded Depretis in 1887. He was a sincere patriot, a cultured man and one of the best and most eloquent lawyers in Italy, but he was too impulsive, too passionate. He was a great orator and knew how to dominate the entire Senate, leading them to vote according to his political ideas. Few could escape his omnipotent magnetism, and the irresistible fascination of his eloquence.

On the other hand Crispi was sincerely convinced that in the interest of Italian prestige, it was perhaps necessary to profit by the state of things in Abyssinia, in extending the Italian possessions by occupying Keren and Asmasa. He believed in an alliance with Menelik, who in his own interest and to more easily triumph over his rivals, made the broadest promises to Italy. Crispi gave the name of " Eritrea " to the new Colony, believing that a new era of prosperity would arise. At the same time an Italian protectorate was established over a vast zone of the Somali peninsula. Then Crispi used his marvellous oratorical power and his rich fantasy to induce the others to believe as he himself really did, that they would be laying a foundation for a glorious future for the Italian Colonial ambitions.

But, unfortunately, the enormous expenses soon exhausted the State funds.

In 1889, the Budget was closed with a DEFICIT of more than two hundred million lire. This financial crisis brought on strikes and rebellions all over Italy, which greatly disturbed the kindly King, who never stopped imploring the Government to do something to better the workmen's conditions, because in the betterment of labour conditions he saw justly an important element for the grandeur and the well-being of the nation. But Crispi, hoping for the future and trusting in his personal friendship for Bismarck, was too absorbed in his political ambitions to listen to the King's pleas.

In the meantime the news from Africa was not satisfying. As soon as the subjugation of all of Abyssinia was assured, Menelik declared that he did not intend to recognise the Italian protectorate.

The Dervishes were another disturbance for Italy, and disrespecting the Italian peace advances in December 1893, they attacked the fort of Agordat. They were ignominiously defeated, leaving one thousand dead and seventy-two flags on the field.

Victories and defeats followed in rapid succession. Heroic officers commanded the poverty stricken troops, commanded and died, or in a few cases lived long enough to share their glory with a few of their valorous soldiers.

Anxious to satisfy public opinion a new Minister ordered General Baratieri to use his energy to induce the enemy to attack the Italians in their trenches or to retreat and leave the home troops in safety. Fourteen thousand men were led to action the first of March, 1896.

The Abyssinians were encamped on the outskirts of Adua. The enemy advanced with an impressionable impetuosity, completely routing the Italians, almost a third of the entire corps being killed; among the dead there were many brilliant young officers, courageous generals and fine, strong, soldiers whose families in Italy, mothers, wives, and children, could not resign themselves to the irreparable, useless loss of their dead ones.

Francesco Crispi passed many bitter hours in those days, when too late the people learned that the Government had dared to undertake, unprepared, so difficult an enterprise.

No woman in Italy suffered more sincerely over the defeat of Adua than Queen Margherita, who in her great loving heart felt the sufferings of all the unfortunate mothers, wives, and sisters of the heroic officers and soldiers, so miserably and vainly massacred.

And it was in those days of intense sorrow that Margherita said through her tears: "Ah! If the people could only know how we are suffering now! And to think that there are some who profit by the momentary adverse fortune to put the responsibility on the King! It is all disgraceful!" And she was ready to put her private fortune at the Government's disposition rather than to have the blame for the losses in Africa fall on the King.

As Crown Princess Margherita established a reputation in Europe for taste and elegance in dress, but with all her elegance she was modest, for while following the mode, she followed it intelligently, by adopting it to her own particular type of beauty. Her taste in

colours was quiet, in that she usually dressed in white, when the occasion permitted it, and always her evening gowns were of a shimmering white stuff; satin or velvet were her favourite materials.

She was notably one of the best dressed Queens in Europe, famous for her beautiful laces and furs, and with reason, as she had a magnificent collection of both. Her jewels, those marvellous emeralds that now shine in the midnight hair and on the shoulders of Queen Elena, were among her most cherished possessions; and famous for their beauty were the thirty-three strings of pearls given her by King Umberto. Yet, during the war in Africa, there came a day when she offered to sell them because her private funds were insufficient to aid all the poor as well as the families of those lost in the conflict.

Rome was desperately worried over the needs in Africa, where supplies and provisions were in urgent demand. And it was then that Margherita insisted upon giving all the money destined for her private charities that year. When she was respectfully reminded that the money must serve for the poor in Italy, very badly concealing her emotion, she exclaimed vehemently: "I will sell my jewels rather than permit our war prisoners, who are deprived of every joy, to do without the bare necessities of life. Never must those poor men think that we have abandoned them! Luck was against them on the battlefield making them doubly unfortunate! And so it is our duty, mine as well as the Government's, at no matter what sacrifice, to care for their needs. I have no money to give, so some of my jewels, perhaps an emerald or so, must go!"

But immediately the King heard of the Queen's

offer he gave half a million lire to a fund for the soldiers and their destitute families, and Umberto's example was quickly followed by many rich people, so that food, clothing, wine, and all other necessities were sent to Africa. And the Queen's jewels were saved for posterity.

The mothers, wives, and children of the officers and soldiers killed in Africa were helped more often by the King and Queen personally than by the Government, as the pension laws for the family of those killed in war are regulated by the length of time the officers and soldiers had been in service, and the Court of Accounts, depending on the Secretary of the Treasury can only register by special laws. So on the occasions, when the Government could not help, the generosity of Umberto and Margherita never failed.

The knowledge of the love of Emanuele Filiberto, Duke d'Aosta, nephew of King Umberto for the exquisite daughter of the Count de Paris, was approved and rejoiced over by both the King and the Queen, and the engagement was hailed with delight by all Italy. The Princess Helene d'Orleans was educated in England, and her marriage to the Duke d'Aosta was solemnised at Kingston-on-Thames, on June 20th, 1895.

The Duchess d'Aosta always has been recognised in Italy as one of the most aristocratic figures at Court during two reigns. She was a Red Cross nurse during the World War, and passed most of her time visiting the field hospitals, as well as those in the cities. She is greatly beloved for her goodness, and when, in 1919, one of her ladies-in-waiting, the Marchesa Toriani, was ill at her home in Florence, the Duchess left the work



IL RE UMBERTO
LA REGINA JULIA MARIA
LE PRINCIPESSE ELEN
MARGHERITA VITTORIA

at the front and went to Florence to personally help to take care of her friend and lady-in-waiting. And she remained there until the Marchesa Toriani died. The Marchesa Toriani had been a nurse in The Croce di Roma, an independent order composed of many of the most aristocratic women in Italy, who volunteered their services to the Policlinico Hospital, at Rome. As I worked with that order I often heard the Marchesa, and other nurses, talking of the Duchess d'Aosta, and how thoroughly Italian her heart had become, even though she was born in France, and how tireless she was in her work among the wounded, so tireless that we often felt ashamed of the little we were doing. And certainly she was a great inspiration to all Italian women who were inclined to sit home and let the men fight for the country, and be cared for by men.

The most intimate friends of the Royal family of Savoia predicted that when the Crown Prince reached the years of discretion, he would follow the dictates of his heart, in so far as the proper respect for the rights of the dynasty would permit him to.

Despite his mother's strict ideas of morality, Vittorio Emanuele had managed to see a great deal of the world, and to enjoy life. Yet, like his mother, he believed that love should be the base and substance of marriage; and that without love no marriage could give a happy offspring. Brought up to think that even above the throne there is the sovereignty of love, blessed of all things in the family, he therefore never bothered his care-free head about the various matrimonial suggestions of Ministers and Diplomats, expecting that when the proper hour struck he would encounter the woman capable of awakening the grand

passion in his soul, without which he was not willing to assume the responsibility of husband and father.

And, so, when the young Prince of Naples completed the serious studies which his most exalted position forced upon him, he started on a long sea voyage, for the first time in his life absolutely free to go where he would. To the depths of his very soul he enjoyed the pure grandeur of the sea, and that of the strange and new countries he visited. Often he lingered for weeks in some country, studying the people, the customs, and perhaps storing up a knowledge of the way of governing that has so well served him in recent years. The frequent trips made by Vittorio Emanuele on his sailing yacht, *Gatola* on the Adriatic and Ionian seas, touching Dalmatia, and from there going inland, began to be talked about. What, the Italians wondered, was their Prince doing in a little unimportant country like Montenegro? Surely he could not be going there to see the daughter of the ruling Prince when there were so many Princesses for him to choose from without seeking one from a kingdom that was even less important than certain duchies?

But while the Crown Prince heard all the gossip he said nothing, for guided by that mysterious, always unexplainable magnetic force, the heir to the Italian throne had discovered that his domestic happiness depended upon the love of the handsome Princess Elena Petrovitch of Montenegro.

The King and Queen first knew the Princess Elena, at Venice, in April 1895, where they were for the opening of the International Art Exhibition. When Elena arrived with her mother, Princess Milena, and her sister Princess Anna, official visits were exchanged between the two Royal families. Then it began to be

noticed that Queen Margherita kept the Montenegrins with her much longer than necessary, and that the calls were frequent, and quite unofficial. One one occasion King Umberto was seen helping the foreign Princess into her gondola, holding her hand a little longer than necessary, and talking, apparently, most interestingly and affectionately with her.

The Princesses of Montenegro often dined informally with the Italian Court, and they also took part at an official dinner on May 2nd; the same evening they were recognised in the Royal box with the King and Queen at a gala performance given at the Venice Theatre. This was the first time that the public had seen the Princess Elena seated beside the Queen, which in itself was significant, and still more so was the fact that Margherita talked to her continually.

Beside the fresh brunette beauty of the young Princess "of the raven hair and sparkling eyes," Margherita, who was no longer young, appeared to shine with an ethereal glory, her blonde beauty accentuated rather than attenuated by the freshness of the girl at her left.

Elena Petrovitch was from the mountains, of a most substantial stock; it was thought that she would make a fine mother for a future heir to the throne, and the Italians that evening were convinced that she was to be selected for their second Queen. Most of them were well pleased with Vittorio Emanuele's choice.

This love marriage of her son was one of the greatest satisfactions of Margherita's life. From the day she learned of Vittorio Emanuele's intentions towards Elena she always spoke of her as "my daughter," and though there were times when she did not entirely

approve of the young Queen's ways of conducting her private life, she always loved her sincerely and tenderly. The day the engagement was announced to the public, she telegraphed to Prince Nikita, Elena's father : " Elena will find in me an affectionate mother."

When Vittorio Emanuele was a little boy Margherita had studied Latin in order to encourage him to study languages, and when he was about to be married, for love of her future daughter-in-law she studied Russian, (spoken in Montenegro), so that when settled in Italy, far from her own people, Elena might sometimes be able to speak her own language, and so not feel too lonely for the land of her birth.

As a pastime in those days, when society permitted her to retire to the privacy of her own apartments, she took up Archæology, having long conferences on the subject with Professor Bernabei, who was also charged to keep her informed of all the new discoveries.

Besides her interest and reverence for Carducci's talent, Margherita was a great admirer of Giacosa and Fogazzaro, two famous writers of their day, and of Boito, the composer, whose *Nerone* was first given only a few years ago, and after his death, at the Scala Theatre. Along with the illustrious men, artists, and faithful patriots, the above trio were often received at the Quirinale.

Before every trip she took during her long and useful life to a hitherto unknown country or city, Margherita read many guide books and studied the history of the place, thus hoping to get the maximum profit from her visit. She knew every nook and corner of Italy, the history of the most important and unimportant events, the legends, and there are many, and the local customs,

for though united, Italy still has innumerable dialects, sometimes changing from one town to another, within a radius of twenty-five miles, costumes and customs.

She greatly favoured the use of the characteristic costumes of each and every region, and frequently she herself set the example when at Gressoney, by dressing in the white blouse and red apron of the peasants. And the Court were politely asked to do the same. She greatly admired the serious costumes of the Tyrolese, and the French provinces of Normandy and Brittany. The Russian and the Polish peasants, with their gay boots had a special fascination, but the Montenegrin pleased her more than all the others.

Once when talking of costumes, at rather a large reception shortly before the marriage of the Crown Prince, she announced that she would like nothing better than to be able to see her future daughter-in-law arrive in Italy with a box full of native peasant costumes so that sometime they could give a real Montenegrin peasants Court ball instead of always appearing in conventional Court gowns.

When from the balcony of his own palace Prince Nikita pronounced the simple words : " King Umberto has given his permission to the Prince of Naples to ask for the hand of my daughter Elena, and I am glad to accord it to him—Long live King Umberto ! " Montenegro, as a nation, greeted the announcement of the engagement of their favourite princess to the Crown Prince of Italy with expressions of joy.

On the mountain sides and in the valleys torches burned and shouts of " Long live King Umberto, Queen Margherita, and the Prince of Naples," echoed and re-echoed in the surrounding country. Following

this typical celebration of joy and satisfaction, a *Te Deum* was sung in the Cathedral.

It was shortly after, August 18th, 1896, the feast of Saint Elena, that a Stefani telegram announced the engagement of the Crown Prince Vittorio Emanuele with the Princess Elena Petrovitch, daughter of Prince Nikita Negasti, of Montenegro.

It was feared that the difference in religion might be an obstacle so far as Queen Margherita was concerned, but that difference was soon overcome as Princess Elena wrote to her future mother-in-law shortly after the engagement was officially announced, that she already felt that living faith in God which is the base and source of the true Catholic religion. Then she again wrote, this time a long letter in Italian, which she began to study as soon as she knew Vittorio Emanuele, telling how her engagement to the Prince of Naples crowned the most ardent desires of her heart. She, of the mountains, cited to the Queen of the capitals, how greatly she admired the Savoian princesses, noted for their bounty and feminine virtues, and added that she hoped to emulate their fine characters, and that her great longing was to become truly Italian, for she knew of no country so admired by all Montenegro, and certainly none was so beloved by her.

Of all this Margherita had very little to say, for while it was true that she rejoiced in her son's happiness, and was convinced that he had chosen well, there was undoubtedly a little longing in her heart for a Savoian daughter-in-law, one of themselves, who might more ably carry on the family traditions.

Pope Leone XIII sent an affectionate telegram to Prince Nikita, congratulating him on the approaching marriage of his daughter Elena, and promising special

privileges for her conversion to the Catholic faith. Following the telegram he made her a precious gift.

Montenegrins are generally handsome, strong, and healthy, and in their original and artistic native costumes are a distinct type apart from nearly all other Europeans. The women are naturally beautiful, proud, and passionate, and they make good wives and mothers, being exceptionally tender and devoted in the home. Princess Milena was an example of that, as from a lovely young bride she consecrated herself to her husband, Prince Nikita, and together they gave their people a model example of the simplest and purest sort of living, educating their nine children with the greatest care, giving up everything for them and their subjects, who they considered as a part of their own family. No pomp, no formality, no special etiquette in any way disturbed the lofty simplicity of those sovereigns of the wonderful country that rises between the rocky, wooded mountains, wild and fertile plains and the intense blue sea.

From a child the Princess Elena had shown humanitarian sentiments, and maternal instincts, and an independent, democratic spirit. She and one of her sisters always went out walking alone with a governess, and they were continually surrounded by poor children, to whom they gave money, and often when the children's garments were worn and thin they brought them back to the palace and dressed them in their own clothes.

And so it was not only her physical beauty that attracted the Royal Prince to the Princess Elena, but rather her kindness of heart and generosity, which so resembled that of his own mother, and made him believe that one day she could worthily occupy the place of Margherita of Savoia.

At last the Princess Elena with her suite arrived in Italy, and the Royal marriage took place at Rome on October 24th, 1896, in the magnificent church designed by Michelangelo, and consecrated to Santa Maria degli Angeli. All the reigning families in Europe were represented. The classic church was filled with Ambassadors in grand uniforms, ladies of the two Courts, and of the highest Roman society dressed in gorgeous robes and wearing magnificent jewels. Instead of the regular guard of soldiers to keep the people in order along the streets through which the wedding party had to pass, young cadets from the Military and Naval Academies held the lines. All those young men were more impressed by the King and Queen's evident emotion, and the tender, passionate love that illumined the faces of both the bride and groom, than they were by the grand spectacle of the passing society.

The bride was extremely beautiful in her simple white gown, many family jewels, and the bracelet on her left arm, which Vittorio Emanuele gave her as an engagement present. This bracelet is reputed to have cost a million lire.

Presently, after some days of continuous festivity the young couple departed on their honeymoon, and Italy settled down to its usual calm, and in order to satisfy their subjects in hitherto neglected cities, Umberto and Margherita began a new round of visits.

The three years following the marriage of the Crown Prince were among the most uneventful in the life of Margherita of Savoia. A sense of calm seemed to have invaded her very soul, and everything she did brought her a quiet satisfied joy, a sort of preparation for the storm ahead. There were rounds and rounds of visits

and exhibitions of every sort to be opened, but the air was calm politically, and more or less so socially.

Backwards and forwards to the Quirinale at Rome, San Rossore near Turin, the Riviera, a few days at Naples, Venice, and Florence. A long winter of official receptions, and a glorious spring when Margherita was able to spend hours driving in the Villa Borghese, or the suburbs of Rome, and then, official duties over in the capital, Umberto was free to retire for a short rest to the Villa at Monza, the lovely villa that had been presented to him when he was Crown Prince, and where he had taken Margherita as a bride.

She had a special sentimental attachment for the Royal villa at Monza, and even though their vacations there were usually far too short, she was always happy and contented in the luxuriously simple surroundings among the trees and glorious flowers in the gardens.

It was July 29th and very hot. However, the heat did not prevent the King from accepting an invitation to assist at an athletic event given in his honour. It was one of the thousands of duties that fall to the lot of every King, and he was glad to be able to fulfil it. He was in an unusually genial mood when shortly before dinner he came into the Queen's boudoir for a few minutes' chat.

Margherita, who never interfered with the King's plans, seemed nervous when he casually mentioned the performance that he must attend immediately after the early dinner.

"But aren't you tired, Umberto?" she asked anxiously. "The day has been hot, even for this time of year, and I think it would be nice for you to stay with us this evening, just to rest a little."

He laughed at her suggestion, and told her that to begin with he was not tired, and that though he would enjoy a quiet evening with her, and the ladies-of-the-Court, he must go to the athletic field as he had promised to be there to witness the performance and to distribute the prizes, but that he would be back early. ‘

“Don’t go out to-night, Umberto!” Margherita left her chair by the dressing-table and laying her hand affectionately on her husband’s arm, she looked at him with pleading in her eyes. “I implore you not to go!” she added.

He threw the clinging hand aside gently, and again he laughed at her.

“How strange you are acting,” he said thoughtfully as they went down to dinner.

During the meal Margherita was preoccupied and silent, and the Marchesa di Villamarina noticed that several times she glanced fearfully at the King. The day had been hot, it was true, and there was a sultry breeze blowing then, but there was something more than the heat bothering the Queen.

The Queen was worried. There was a reason for her worry, as that very morning she had received an anonymous, menacing letter advising her that the King would be assassinated. And knowing his fearless nature, and that when he was opposed he was sure to do the thing he should not, she had not dared to mention the letter to him, hoping that her own persuasive powers would be sufficient to convince him of the advisability of remaining at the Villa that evening.

He was to go to his death that evening, and yet that same morning they had both assisted at the Mass said in their private chapel, which to please the people of Monza, had been especially opened to them. Later

it was learned that the vile assassin, Bresei, had entered the chapel with the others and had not been ashamed in the presence of the kind Sovereigns, who so loved to feel themselves surrounded by their subjects, associating with them in their prayers, as they did in their needs, giving them a lofty example of lives nobly lived.

The stadium where the performance was to be given was about a mile from the villa. A special tribune had been erected for the King and his suite. The place was filled to the last seat, and a crowd of some ten thousand persons acclaimed His Majesty with touching enthusiasm when he entered to the solemn, vibrant notes of the Royal anthem.

At twenty minutes past ten the performance was over, the prizes had been distributed by the King, he had shaken hands cordially with the civil authorities as well as the prize winners ; then amidst the renewed enthusiastic acclamations of all present Umberto came out of the Royal tribune, talked a moment with the General in command of the regiments stationed at Monza, and jumped into the waiting carriage to return to the Royal villa. The carriage passed slowly through lines of cheering, shouting people. Suddenly above the cheering, three revolver shots reverberated on the heavy, sultry, air. Three quick shots in rapid succession. A deadly silence, a hoarse smothered cry, and then those shouting, cheering, happy people understood the horrible truth. Their King, the kind, good King, had been assassinated. Those nearest the carriage pushed forward, panic-stricken, but ready to help the unhappy victim.

"Thank you, thank you, my friends," Umberto murmured, not at all realising what had happened to

him. Then he fell back, fainting, against the right side of the carriage.

The maddened crowd would have lynched the assassin on the spot, had it not been for the timely assistance of the carabinieri (Italian special police) who managed to surround him, and to get him to a place of safety.

How, it has often been asked, did Bresei manage to get close enough to the King to fire at his heart? That would have been a simple matter for anyone, considering that Umberto of Savoia was a man without fear, and who, even though there had already been several attempts on his life, continued to believe in the ardent love of his subjects, and that there was not one among them who would willingly harm him. Also, he considered it his duty to give himself freely to those who wanted him, and to be closely guarded would have been keeping his subjects at a distance and might have demonstrated a lack of confidence in them.

On the evening of the fatal July 29th, he was driving in an open carriage drawn by four horses, moving slowly in time to the Royal March, and at the exact moment of the shooting he had turned to General Ponzio-Vaglia, who was seated on his left, to say how delightful the evening had been. And it was in that unguarded moment when he had turned his head away from his people that Bresei jumped on the carriage step on the side on which the King was sitting, and fired the first shot so close that besides going directly to the heart, it burned the cloth of his coat.

Those in the carriage with the King knew instantly that the wound was fatal.

Queen Margherita, dressed in her favourite white satin, several rows of pearls around the soft snowy

throat, was in the large reception-room with an informal party composed of several ladies and gentlemen of the Court. There had been a moment's lull in the conversation, and then suddenly the sound of galloping horses fell on the silence. Margherita jumped up, one hand over her heart, the other clutched in fear: "They've done it!" A sob that was a scream, the words came from lips suddenly as white as her dress. She ran from the room, out to the balcony giving on the double landing staircase which went down to the drive.

General Ponzio-Vaglia called excitedly from the carriage: "His Majesty the King has been wounded. It is very serious, Your Majesty, but not hopeless."

Without waiting to hear more she ran down the wide steps, the white train floating back of her, the satin of her gown glimmering in the flickering gas lights. It was ten minutes to eleven when they gently carried King Umberto into the villa. Already he had been dead some minutes.

Margherita absolutely refused to believe that there was no hope of reanimating him, and insisted that something be done to save him. When at last a physician arrived from the city, even though she knew in her heart that life was extinct, she still urged him to try some means of forcing respiration. And still she sat beside the bed with Umberto's icy hand in hers, the beautiful, shimmering white satin gown stained with the blood of the murdered King.

"Doctor, save the King, save him!" she implored. "Have pity on me, save him!" In vain the physician and the Marchesa di Villamarina begged her to leave him, in vain they assured her that nothing more could be done, in vain they tried to make her understand that life was extinct even before he had been lifted

out of the carriage. At last the terrible truth appeared in all its horror, and dropping on her knees close to the bed, in a paroxysm of tears, she fairly screamed, a scream that fell a terrific, heart-rending note on the awful silence of death :

“Umberto ! Umberto ! How could they kill you ; you who so loved your people ? Ah ! this is in truth the greatest crime of the century ! ”

Getting up quickly, as though suddenly conscious of the duties to be performed, duties that she alone could perform, she leaned over to kiss the cold face, to bathe it with her tears. At last the kindly Marchesa di Villamarina, who so deeply loved her, was unable to withstand the strain of seeing such suffering, and persuaded the Queen to retire to her own apartment for a few minutes while the doctor and several gentlemen of the Court prepared the body for the mortuary chapel.

When the King was being undressed a folded card was found in his vest pocket punctured by the fatal bullet. It was a card that the Marchesa di Villamarina had given him that morning with the names and addresses of many poor families of Monza whom he had the intention of aiding the following day. The list had been prepared after a careful survey of the really needy, and the murderous bullet that stopped the grand and generous heart-beats first passed through that list, making of the little card the last and most convincing documentary evidence of the inexhaustible kindness of King Umberto for his poor.

Without stopping to change the white satin, blood-stained gown, throwing only a black lace scarf over her Queen Margherita watched all through the night close beside the King, her husband, for had he been

merely her King, hers, perhaps would not have been the first right at that time, but he was her husband, and hers was the sacred duty to sit or kneel near him as he lay with candles at head and feet, among the flowers in the mortuary chapel. And there, in that sacred spot, she herself wrote telegrams for the Government, the Army, for Rome, telegrams which in veiled words told of her own suffering and high sensibility. The urgent affairs of State attended to, she asked simply to be left alone to watch and pray. Not even the Marchesa di Villamarina was permitted to stay nearby. And there, with the flickering candles the only light, Margherita of Savoia remained in solitary vigil until dawn.

Whatever she may have suffered during their married life through Umberto's caprices in love, and most certainly her pride had frequently suffered, all was suddenly forgotten, as it must always be before the majesty of death, and in those sacred hours beside the body of the man who had been her husband, she remembered only that he had been a kind, affectionate and always appreciative husband, who, no matter what caprice had hold of him, never neglected his duty to her as wife and Queen.

When the first clear light of dawn crept into the mortuary chapel Margherita went to the door, and calling for a cavalier of the Court said in a voice in which there was not the slightest trace of the emotion through which she had passed: "Go tell the Signora X—— to come and pray." Then she went to her own apartment.

The Signora X—— was not in service, but nevertheless she was living in her villa nearby.

Very early the same morning Margherita had

telegrams sent to all the semaphores of the Italian and Oriental coasts, to recall to his country the young King, her son, who with his bride had left Greece the afternoon of the 29th, on his yacht *Yela* for an unknown destination. And it was at sea, during a pleasure trip that the cruel news of his father's death reached Vittorio Emanuele III. Thus the crown that was to be his came to him over the waters and the anguish that invaded his heart, the heart of a devoted and affectionate son.

The real superiority of Margherita's character was revealed in all its sovereign greatness during the tragic night of July 29-30th, and in the succeeding days when, because of the young King's absence she was obliged to assume the direction of all urgent business attending upon the tragic event. There were telegrams without number to be sent, and others to reply to. Ministers to be received, arrangements and orders for the funeral, which was to take place as soon as the new King arrived.

Then it was that the Italians saw how indomitable her spirit was, recognised the value of her courage, and knew of the calm and force that came to her in her hour of need through her deep and abiding trust in God. As always she found a supreme consolation in prayer, a comfort beyond the human ken. The proof of that is seen in the prayer written during the solemn hours of the tragic night, when alone beside the body of her husband she found solace for the anguish in her soul by pouring out her heart in supplication for him. The prayer, which was translated into many languages, was sent a few days later to Monsignore Geremia Bonamelli, Archbishop of Cremona, along with the following letter for public distribution :



QUEEN MOTHER

" MONSIGNORE :

I know that with heart and thoughts you are near to me in this terrible moment, in which the good God is trying all Italy. I know also that your thoughts as well as your prayers are for him, for our poor King, who so loved his people and now has fallen a victim to that love, pierced by three bullets which were fired by the hand of an Italian. How horrible !

" God in His pity has deigned to save the King the supreme bitterness of knowing that the murderous hand which fired the shots at his sacred person was that of an Italian, one of his own beloved subjects !

" I think and believe that the good God has helped me to write a prayer in memory of our lamented King, a prayer that all can say for the repose of his soul.

" This prayer has come from my heart, and I have written it simply so that everyone may understand it. Now, first of all, I believe that the permission and approbation of a Bishop is necessary in order to divulge it, and I have thought of you, who from the bottom of my heart I venerate, and I hope that you will wish to do this favour for me. I beg you to have this little devotion copied and printed, and to ask that it be used in memory of my husband and King, until such time as all the people of Italy, all Italians scattered over the world are praying for him ; and please let them know that I have written it, and so, perhaps, through the love that, through no merit of my own, they bear me, they, our people, will willingly recite this, my prayer."

This letter along with the prayer was published in every paper in Italy, with the following words from the Archbishop of Cremona :

" How, my friends, could I refuse to accept this prayer which has come from the heart of the august

and proud woman, our beloved Queen Margherita, written, as it was beside the corpse of our King, her husband ?

"It would have been cruel to refuse this prayer, and at the same time a great loss to the religious population of an example of enormous faith, pity and Christian strength, more singular than rare."

Queen Margherita's Prayer :

"IN MEMORY OF UMBERTO I"

(My signore and consort)

Rosary :

Creed—Pater—de Profundis—Because he had mercy for everyone, according to Thy laws, O Seignior, have mercy upon him, and give him peace.—The ten Ave Maria.

Pater—de Profundis—Because he never wanted other than justice, have pity on him, O Seignior. The ten Ave Maria.

Pater—de Profundis—Because always he pardoned others, pardon him his mistakes, those mistakes inevitable to all human nature, O Seignior ! The ten Ave Maria.

Pater—de Profundis—Because he so loved his people and never thought of other than the good of his country, receive him in Thy Glorious Country, O Seignior ! The ten Ave Maria.

Pater—de Profundis—Because he was good until his last breath, and fell a victim of his own bounty, give him the Eternal Crown of the Martyrs, O Seignior ! The ten Ave Maria, Pater—de Profundis.

Prayer :

"O Seignior, he did only good in this world, he never bore malice towards anyone, he pardoned all

those who wronged him, sacrificed his entire life to duty and to the good of the Patria, and always, even to his very last breath he studied the best way of fulfilling the mission which, Thou, O Seignior, had trusted to him in this world.

"For his vermillion blood that flowed from three wounds, for the cruel death which crowned a life of bounty and justice, O Seignior, piteous and just, receive him in Thine arms, and for his virtues, and they were many, give him the reward of Eternal peace.

Stabat Mater—de Profundis."

Those who were close to Margherita of Savoia in the days following Umberto's untimely death were awed by the absolute dominion over self which she showed at all times. Though undoubtedly suffering intensely—her pallor proved that—she went about her duties in a systematical way that astonished everyone. She ate and apparently slept normally, and it was not until the Duchess of Genova arrived that she openly gave way to her feelings.

With the tender, loving mother's arms about her, suddenly the lovely blonde head was on the maternal breast, while the tears so long suppressed broke through the flood gates, and Margherita, Italy's adored Queen, sobbed as she had not done since a very small child.

The shock of having the King, and still more her husband brought home dead, the loss of the throne, which she had graced so well, and the changes that loss would mean, the taking of a second place when for so long she had been first, to sit and watch another doing what she had done, to be a mere figurehead, a Queen Mother, when until then her word had been law ;

all that, and much more came to her there in her mother's arms. Hers had been a life of many triumphs and now it was over, while she was still in her prime. Moral sufferings she had had in plenty, but with them all she had continued to march ahead. "Avanti Savoia" could no longer be her motto, rather must she pass it on to one who was only Savoian by marriage.

The paroxysm of grief lasted only a few minutes, for almost immediately she regained her calm and was again ready to take charge of the many duties still left to her.

As soon as word came that Vittorio Emanuele III had landed in Italy, Margherita sent her brother, Tomaso, Duke of Genova, to meet him, so that he might learn the painful details of the tragedy, of which he was naturally still ignorant, from a member of the family.

All the Princes of the House of Savoia were gathered at the Monza railway station to receive the young King and his Queen, and the Duke of Genova. The closed Royal carriage passed rapidly through the silent streets of the little city, where the flags at half mast and draped with black crêpe in sign of national mourning hung limply. At the foot of the staircase of the Royal villa the Princesses of Savoia were waiting, their heavy mourning clothes a sad note against the brilliant reds and yellows of the garden flowers and the white of the house. Alone in her room Margherita impatiently paced the floor, tears in her eyes, her arms aching for the son's caress.

He was a King, but he was still young and he had lost his father. With tears streaming unheeded down his cheeks, Vittorio Emanuele took his grief-stricken mother to him, in that solemn moment abandoning

himself to his sorrow. And that was the moment in which the son and mother came closer together than they had for many, many years, or perhaps ever did again. It was then that the young King appreciated his mother's worth both as Queen and woman, and though to all outward appearances they remained close in after years, the sense of perfect understanding that was theirs that day never returned.

Keeping her emotion under control Margherita conducted her son and Queen Elena to the mortuary chapel, where together they knelt in prayer beside the bier of Umberto I.

The walls of the chapel were covered with dark red damask, and in each corner there were tall palm leaves ; the casket stood on the base of a Napoleonic throne brought from the Royal Palace at Milan, and was covered by red velvet, the arms of Savoja richly embroidered in the centre. High candelabras, each containing twelve thick candles surrounded the casket. On a red cushion between the Italian flag and his sword was the famous iron crown, and high on the altar a great white cross shone against a red background. The ante-room of the chapel was filled with the floral offerings from every country in Europe.

When their prayers were ended, there in the mortuary chapel beside the bier, Margherita told her son the important details of the assassination. Her absolute calm made a great impression on the impulsive young Queen, whose respect for her mother-in-law was to increase as the days passed, though the affection she felt for her remained what it had been always, a tender, respectful, daughterly love.

The reunion of the Royal family was very touching, but when they dined together that first evening of

mourning at Monza, and Queen Margherita graciously offered the foot of the table to the young Queen, Elena burst into tears, and refused to sit other than at the left hand of the King.

And it was sometime before the kindly, tender Elena could take the place due her at Court, and least of all that at table. In those trying days it seemed impossible for her to pass in front of the heroic woman who had for so long occupied the first place not only at Court, but in the hearts of all her subjects.

Elena Petrovitch was born with the instincts of a real lady, so she could not resign herself to the thought of pushing herself forward when an older woman was present. She could not have done it if the older woman had been her own mother, and it was next to impossible for her to thrust aside her husband's mother, and Italy's former Queen.

Queen Elena never learned to overcome this feeling of humility where Queen Margherita was concerned.

"Umberto, il buono" (the good) as he must go down in history, was buried in the Pantheon at Rome, amidst a solemn splendour such as can only be given to a great personage in Europe. His funeral was, however, most dignified, reverent, and as glorious as any the city had ever seen. He was mourned as a good, kind father, by high and low, rich and poor, and perhaps most of all by his humble subjects, many of whom had at some period of their lives shaken his hand, and heard his kindly voice.

If his reign was not marked by any special events or important historical acts, it certainly was not without grave social and economical difficulties, brought about by imprudent and inopportune aspirations and

reactionary attempts, in which he appeared as the wise moderator between the two parties, always respecting those who seemed to have the interests of the country at heart. He was ever ready to pardon whatsoever offence, took no care of himself, while the country's honour was his first and last thought. Of very broad ideas he never stopped before anything that might be of advantage to his people.

At his trial Bresei admitted that he did not want to kill Umberto, (even an assassin acknowledged his bounty), but the King; and Bovio, an eminent republican, replied with the words that have since become famous :

“Twenty years of life taken from Umberto have added two hundred to the House of Savoia.”

CHAPTER XI

QUEEN MOTHER

AFTER the cruel grief that came so unexpectedly upon her, Margherita of Savoia retired to the Castle of Slupinigi, where during many long months of comparative solitude she learned to be resigned to conditions as they were. In her retirement she spent hours in meditation and prayer, and she read a great deal, and studied many questions which were to be useful to her in the years to follow. While at Slupinigi she received innumerable supplicating messages from the people of every social class imploring her to return to the Eternal City.

In order to encourage her to content the popular vote, and doubtless so as not to have her live alone and too far away from his protection, Vittorio Emanuele decided to make the august mother a present of one of the most beautiful modern palaces at Rome, that of Prince Boncompagni-Ludovisi, a palace which for several years had been used as the American Embassy.

But, far from activity and crowds, in her quiet nest Margherita of Savoia believed that she was happier than she could be as Queen Mother in the midst of the gay life of the capital, and so for long she hesitated to accept the offer of the palace. It was difficult for her to go to Rome to take second place, she who had been the enthroned goddess. The Quirinale had been her home from her arrival at Rome as

Crown Princess and to find her place occupied by another, even a cherished daughter-in-law, was not quite her idea of being a Queen. In Rome she had been THE Queen, even before she was crowned, and she preferred to live in retirement on her past honours, a retirement that with the passing of time might become practically a religious seclusion, than to see a less queenly woman on the throne. But the call of her people, and they proved that they were still HER people, was urgent, and at last she made up her mind to take the fatal step.

As one united heart all of Italy had sent Queen Margherita a deep and tender salutation after King Umberto's death, not an *addio*, but rather an affectionate *arrivederci*, because they felt that if Margherita of Savoia never came back in the festive Court carriage, nor was seen in the specious Royal box at the Costanzi, at the Scala, or at the San Carlo, at least she would be again, and always where there was suffering to console, an Italian hero to glorify, an exhibition of art to praise.

And that *arrivederci*, an apotheosis of love and glory, scintillated in the letter sent her by the Senate :

"The Senate, which has seen you glorifying the throne, through your efforts breathing love and courtesy on all, in this dark hour of shame and mourning, reaffirms its ancient and holy reverence. 'The poetry of the House of Savoia is broken' you yourself said that on an unlucky day. No, august Woman, the poetry of your House has not been destroyed, instead it has increased, because the aureole of a new martyrdom encircles it, and renders it more venerable and sacred in the eyes of all men.

"You educated your son to follow the magnanimous

examples of his ancestors, and to-day he assumes, through the tears of all Italians, the blood-stained paternal crown. So long as you follow close behind, to watch over that elect head, so long as you, glorious widow and mother of a King, will sit as guardian of the antique oak of your House, the ire of the winds will never come to uproot it."

There were those who did prophesy that Margherita of Savoia had disappeared from Rome forever, that she would never be strong-minded enough to see herself set aside by a younger Queen, that she who had been idolised for so long could never resign herself to being less so. But it was not true. She had loved too many noble things, and still had too much of herself to give to her people.

It is true that the leaving of the Quirinale was a hard break, but it had come "through the grace of God" and therefore was no fault of hers, and she had passed through too many difficult moments not to be able to face the inevitable bravely, so when the crucial hour had struck, she was the first to voluntarily push the new Queen forward, voluntarily to obscure herself in the shadows.

Having often seen it she knew the princely villa of the Ludovisi well, with its spreading trees and the freshness of playing fountains, and she believed that she would find many consolations there, and not the least of these was the fact that she was soon to become a grandmother. Given her truly Italian temperament and love of children, this was the greatest joy that middle age could bring her.

And had nothing else been offered her she would have made a pilgrimage to Rome for the baptism of a first grandchild.

The return of Margherita of Savoia, Queen Mother of Italy, to Rome, was fixed for the day before Christmas, 1900, and her arrival was a signal for the greatest demonstration in the city since the death of King Umberto, and it was an unforgettable sight. It seems that never since her arrival at the capital as the much-heralded Crown Princess, had there been such preparations for the reception of any Royal person. From the railway station to the newly acquired Margherita palace, the windows and balconies along the entire way were draped with flags and brocades, and crowded to suffocation with people ready and longing to welcome her. The King, Queen, and the Mayor of Rome were at the station, far out on the platform to take her to their hearts when she got down from the train. The King lifted her in his arms, and Queen Elena's lips trembled as she pressed them to Margherita's cheeks, and her voice shook when holding the small gloved hand in hers she said: "Welcome home, mother dear."

The Royal carriage passed slowly through the crowded streets while shout after shout greeted her: "Margherita! Margherita! *Evviva la nostra vera Regina!*" Then: "Margherita, welcome to Rome!" A woman's or a man's voice close beside, then a child's full of pride and love: "Margherita! *Margherita adorata!*" Hands were held out to her, kisses blown to her, voices trembling with emotion called her dear name. And of a sudden she knew as never before, how deeply she was beloved, and that nothing could ever take the love of her people from her.

At last they reached the new home, that lovely palace which was to become a shelter from the cold of the world to those wounded in mind and body. And there

the ladies of the Ludovisi quarter, with offerings of richest flowers, were waiting to greet and welcome her.

Perhaps never in her whole life was she so deeply touched. Once she had been an emblem of future glory, and welcomed as such; then she stood for a memory, a beloved memory; she realised that to her great joy, a memory that was vital, vibrant, stronger than the emblem had ever been.

The acclamations at the palace were solemn, and when at last, to please the devoted ones standing outside in the cold, softly, respectfully calling for her, she went to the balcony and stood between the King and Queen, a picture of sorrow in her long mourning veil, a murmur, a trembling of many lips, and then some tears revealed how profoundly they had suffered with her, how tenderly they still cherished her, and how for them she must always be their Queen, "*la nostra vera Regina*." Slowly she raised the long black veil, and once again they saw the lovely face, saddened, a trifle aged, but ever beautiful to them, beautified then in its purity of features and distinction of spirit. Like a tender wave caressing the shore the one word came up to her as she stood looking down through her tears at the dearly loved faces below, dearly loved because they belonged to her, because she was the mother of them all:

"Margherita!"

So often in Rome during the war, and after, I had the great happiness of seeing the Queen Mother passing through the streets in her automobile, and never did she pass unobserved, even though there was nothing about the car to attract attention. Wherever she might be calling there a handful of men and

women were gathered to see her come out and get in the car, just for a smile from her they were capable of waiting hours in the broiling sun, or pouring rain. No matter how fast or how slow her car was driven someone always recognised the sweet pale face under a simple black hat, and then a cry of joy would rend the air: "*Margherita! Eccola!*" or "*Ecco Margherita!* How she is always beautiful, our Queen!" The aristocracy loved her, the general populace loved her, and the soldiers—but that comes later.

Often in thinking of Margherita of Savoja I recall a little incident that happened in London, in 1918, an incident that reveals to a foreigner, at least, how greatly beloved two Queen Mothers were at that time.

I was selling roses on Alexandra Day, in the neighbourhood of Wigmore Hall. I had been out a couple of hours, and considering that few people passed by I had done quite well. A very poor looking woman came along the street, so poor looking that I naturally did not ask her to buy a rose. But the woman approached me, and asked how much the roses cost. "Anything you want to give," I answered. "It hain't what I wants to give," the woman smiled showing a mouth practically devoid of teeth, "it's what I can give, Miss." She opened a very flat pocket-book and drew out a half-crown piece. "For Queen Alexandra I'd give my last bob, Miss. Ever seen 'er?" I said I had, and I felt she would not want a poor woman to give her last bob for a rose, even though the money was to go to the poor, and that as I had made a lot that morning I could make a present of one rose. However, she refused to accept the rose unless I took the half-crown. "I said as 'ow I'd give my last bob

for Queen Alexandra, and I keeps my word, Gawd bless 'er ! ”

And so Margherita came to her widow's palace, a woman still in her prime, still beautiful ; her home soon became as a little kingdom of good taste, where all who entered felt the edifying and exalted life being lived there. The Marchesa di Villamarina, and her daughter the Countess Pes, whom the King named as Lady of the Palace, were there near her in one of the villas attached to the palace.

Like her boudoir at the Quirinale, in dull gold and old mirrors, from the windows of which she could see all Rome ; the villa at Monza, and that at Slupinigi, and at Gressoney, so was the Margherita's palace, on the Via Vittorio Veneto. Everywhere she lived she succeeded in creating a poetic atmosphere such as one might compare to that of a grand lady of the Renaissance, that of Margherita being different only in that no calumny was ever attached to the name of Italy's Queen Mother.

The sentimental soul of the woman, for Margherita's soul was sentimental like that of many less distinguished or less learned women, longed for a portrait of the departed King for the grand salon of the Margherita palace, so that at all times she could feel the kindly eyes upon her, see the gentle smile among the beautiful brocades, the plants and exotic flowers surrounding her.

She did not want a pompous portrait in regal mantle, nor did she fancy having him in the brilliant uniform of a General, but rather something informal, such as the simple costume of the happy times, when far from every ostentation of Court life, in the purity of the Alps, he had blessed her with his company.

The portrait in water colours was eventually painted by Carlotta Popert, for whom the Queen had the greatest affection and esteem. This remarkable likeness of King Umberto was never exhibited in Italy, but it was in Germany, where it met with great success, and where Carlotta Popert was highly thought of, so highly that various museums asked Queen Margherita to permit them to have copies of this, the finest portrait ever painted of the late King.

Beside the Popert portrait of Umberto, always the preferred one, Margherita had many others, as well as a collection of her ancestors, among them Vittorio Emanuele II and the Duke of Genova as children. This desire for an art gallery was greatly fostered by her son, who sent dealers out to search for portraits of the Savoians, both men and women, from the origin of the House up to the present generation.

One of the most charming things, and the most delicate ever shown to the public by Queen Elena, was her desire to have Queen Margherita, contrary to the protocol, keep always to the right side at the patriotic ceremonies in which they both took part. The people were ever grateful to her for this affectionate, respectful gesture, which never failed to be remarked, and I believe that it helped to endear the new Queen to them. Through many years Queen Elena was guided in her public life by Margherita, who so much better than she knew the tastes and habits of the Italians. Then too it was remarked that King Vittorio Emanuele when he gave his arm to his mother had an expression of tenderness on his ruddy face that was unusual, as though he felt a new appreciation of her.

A private telephone was installed between the sleep-

ing apartments of the Quirinale and the Margherita palace, enabling the King to talk with his mother, at any hour of the day or night, or if she were lonely, as he felt she might be often, she could ring up her daughter-in-law.

Then the assembling of a rich and important library was another of her interests to which her son contributed. In fact never had she been so spoiled, so petted as she was in the early days of her mourning. If the Court etiquette in official events sometimes separated the two Royal households, in the intimacy of the home there were the deepest and most sincere ties, and certainly everything was done for the comfort and happiness of the Queen Mother.

CHAPTER XII

GRANDMOTHER

IT was a warm and radiant day in June 1901. The open square before the Quirinale swarmed with people awaiting the arrival of Queen Margherita, who was returning to the Royal palace that had seen the serene and happy infancy of her son, to be present at the baptism of a new little flower of the House of Savoia. The baby girl who was to bear her name, Margherita had taken to her great heart upon her arrival into the world, and on that radiant day she was coming back to the scene of her own triumphs, to publicly welcome a wee Savoian.

And still they waited in silence, hundreds of Romans, to tell her how much they rejoiced in this her new-found joy, how much they were hoping to see her smile again.

The horses drawing the Royal carriage moved at a bare walk, picking their way as though fearful of crushing someone under foot. In mute admiration the women clapped their hands, while others shouted : " There she is ! There she is ! "

And sure enough, there she was, the Queen Mother, now the Royal grandmother, erect and smiling, no longer veiled in black under her widow's bonnet as they had last seen her, but dressed all in white, the blonde hair covered by a bit of precious lace fastened with a diadem of pearls and diamonds. She was

dressed so as she felt that when a longed-for baby came into the world it had a right to find joy surrounding it, as the sorrows would come soon enough, and for the new baby she left off the sorrow of her deep mourning for one day.

"There she is! There she is!" A shout and unrestrained applause the words broke forth. As one heart the Italians poured out their best wishes to the baby Jolanda Margherita, as one heart they were bursting with happiness because that day their unforgettable and radiant first Queen had smiled again.

Sometime before, the young Queen had offered a complete outfit to each poor baby born on the day in which the grace of motherhood should come to her. At the same time the Queen Mother had the idea of founding in honour of the first grandchild, a home for the children of working women, a day nursery where the mothers could safely leave their young children during working hours. Assisted by the Marchesa di Villamarina, Margherita personally directed the entire organisation of the work, in a house near the Margherita palace, to which a subterranean passage led directly from the palace. On June 1st, the birth of the Princess Jolanda Margherita was announced, and though perhaps a Prince may have been desired, there was much rejoicing in all Italy, while the Royal family joyously welcomed this first pledge of love.

The pupils of one of the best English Catholic schools in Rome, hearing the newsboys crying at the top of their voices the news that a Princess had been born at the Quirinale, and seeing flags flying from public buildings and private houses, asked the Sister in charge to let them put up a flag for the King's little baby. The school did not own an Italian flag.

Then one of the older girls, belonging to a devout family devoted to the Monarchy, had an ingenious idea. During the recreation hour she collected the hair ribbons from all the pupils, and happily found red, white, and green, among them. Tying these ribbons in proper order on the end of a stick she ran through the class-rooms, followed by the entire school, shouting: "Long live the King, the Queen, and the new-born Princess!"

The Queen Mother gave to her first grandchild the beautiful tortoise-shell cradle that the city of Naples had presented to Vittorio Emanuele. And the day of the baptism she opened the Jolanda Margherita Maternal Home, presenting to each and every member of the Royal family, and to all her personal friends, a photograph of the beautiful dark baby, with the dedication: "For Jolanda Margherita—the Grandmother."

Thus she came back to her own again, and though she remained in deep mourning for many more months, her people knew that she was there with them in case of need, and would eventually be one with their public life just as she had been before.

She lived in a certain retirement then, following a life of study, charitable works, and unending kindnesses; sweetly, tranquilly, one might almost say in a minor key, giving her delicacy of spirit, but continuing always to be the benign lamp to whom all Italians looked up, and who was watched over by them.

Little by little Margherita opened her salon to Rome, giving daily private audiences, and in the evenings receiving a select circle of the highest statesmen, past and present. Musicians, diplomats, talented artists and poets were among her constant visitors,

The famous Quartette of the Queen, organised many years before, and still directed by Sgambati, was often invited to complete these otherwise intellectual evenings with the harmony of the most carefully chosen musical programmes. Her understanding of music made it a rare privilege as well as an honour to be invited to play in her presence, and even for the greatest musicians of those pre-war years it was a real pleasure to be counted among her guests.

In her day she had heard all that was great in music, seen all that was grand in dramatic art, and while she appreciated, and never failed to praise the talent of foreign artists, she was too Italian to admit that the world had so far produced anyone greater than Italy. She never ceased to talk with pride of the triumphs of Eleonora Duse, whom she believed to be the greatest tragedienne who had perhaps ever lived, and that any comparison between her and Sarah Bernhardt, was an insult to the Duse. And for the great Adelaide Ristori, who in private life was the Marchesa Capranica del Grillo, she had an affectionate friendship and unlimited respect.

Adelaide Ristori's art had made her famous at home and abroad, but the respect and affection, superior to any admiration, shown her everywhere was attributable to her extraordinary fine character. As an actress she had received every honour, and as a mother she was proudly satisfied when the King nominated her only son, Giorgio, Honour Cavalier to the Queen.

Presently the long-neglected visits to the schools and charity institutions were resumed, her particular interest being in the "House of Providenza" for poor babies. This house, situated a few miles outside the Salaria Gate, was founded by Father Whitmee, in

1898, with Queen Margherita as a donating patroness. Those who did not know Father Whitmee can never understand the mystic sovereignty of a true priest and worthy disciple of Christ. Averse to every political passion or human ambition, Father Whitmee, Rector of Saint Silvestro's Church, had consecrated his life in a sincere religious spirit to the uplifting of his fellow-men, and the misguided, badly treated children abandoned by those who had brought them into the world, touched him the most.

Taking part in the Presidency Council of the Infante Protection Society at Rome, he was shocked to find the impossibility of providing for all the sad cases. Then he conceived the idea of founding an institution where the very young could be properly looked after, educated, and taught some useful profession which would enable them to remain pure in mind and body, and at the same time put them in a position to be self-supporting. The boys were destined to be cultivators of the soil, while the girls were taught the mysteries of home making, so that in time they could become capable and good wives. The thought of those poor children growing into healthy men and women, learning to cultivate the sad, arid, abandoned Campagna Romana, building their homes on that land, and peopling them with young families that would eventually bring them the joy which they themselves had never known, filled his great heart with a strange peace and contentment. A poet's dream could not have been more beautiful, nor grander than that of a patriot anxious to regenerate and elevate the most unhappy class of a nation. And it is not strange that this lofty Christian and humane idea of Father Whitmee touched the cords of Margherita's tender heart.

Some time before that Father Whitmee had been selected as Queen Margherita's spiritual father and adviser, and long before that selection she had known about his work, and greatly esteemed him, therefore it was not difficult for him to approach her regarding his favourite subject.

The Pallottini, the noble religious order of which Father Whitmee was then the head, belonged to one of the few congregations in which the religious sentiment is in complete harmony with the humanitarian and political. It was founded by the Venerable Vincenzo Pallotti, a pious Roman priest, and the favourite confessor of Pope Pio IX.

As soon as the Queen Mother became interested in the cause of Father Whitmee's institution, many Roman ladies also took the matter to heart, and aided greatly in its development. Afterwards, the young Sovereigns and the Supreme Pontiff, Pio X, also offered their help.

If there was a special spot in Margherita of Savoia's heart for any particular charity it was for this home for destitute abandoned children. To-day, with the kind Father Whitmee, the founder of it, and the beloved Queen both gone, it is still flourishing, and is a constant reminder of the grandeur of two souls whose memory must ever be fresh and dear to all Italians.

Always interested in the doings of her many relatives, Margherita's heart was most often with her favourite nephew, the Duke degli Abruzzi, and during his Polar expedition her thoughts rarely left him. Accompanied by her affectionate good wishes he had completed his trip to the North Pole on the good ship *Stella Polare*, and then Margherita, who had spent

many hours in silent prayer for his safe return, kept her solemn promise to the Madonna by making a thank-offering to the "Signora of Bonavia," at Cagliari, and to the "Madonna of the Consolata," at Turin, of a facsimile in silver of the boat on which he had made the trip. This offering weighed about four pounds, was a yard long and twenty inches high, and represented the famous ship surrounded by ice. The flag with the Savoia arms was at the stern above the glorious name, *Stella Polare*.

Margherita's thank-offering was consigned to Monsignore Agostino Richeliny, Archbishop of Turin, who, with solemn pomp, presented it to the Virgin, in the presence of the Princes and Princesses of the House of Savoia, surrounded by the Court and the élite of the Piemontese society.

The first important reception ever held at the Margherita palace was in honour of Prince Luigi, Duke degli Abruzzi, on the evening of January 13th, 1901. The young explorer wishing to do something to give his august aunt particular pleasure, consented to read his lecture and to show the photographs taken during the trip, and prepared for the National Geographical Society the next day.

All the Royal family, important personages of the Court, and the highest Roman society were gathered together that evening in the sumptuous halls and salons of the Margherita palace, brightly lighted and filled with plants and cut flowers. It was an unforgettable evening, and many of those present rejoiced more in seeing Margherita so like her old self, than in the safe return of the most brilliant of the Savoian princes.

Prince Luigi of Savoia, Duke degli Abruzzi, is probably the best known of the Italian princes outside

of Italy, and his lectures which were given in all the big cities of his own country were attended by many foreigners.

The day after the reception, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the environs of the Roman College presented an imposing sight, which culminated in the immense hall, magnificently arranged for the conference by the Geographical Society. It was one of those winter days when the intensity of the blue sky and the splendour of the sun make Rome spring-like, and those who walk or ride are filled with an unaccountable new joy in living.

The first row of the stalls was occupied by all the Royal family—only Queen Margherita was missing. The ladies were in mourning, the King and the Princes in uniform. Prince Luigi was presented by the President of the Society, and received with a crashing applause. The lecture lasted four hours and was illustrated by four hundred photographic projections. When the Duke spoke of the interest his late uncle, King Umberto, had shown in the expedition, and of his generous help in the preparations, a strange commotion invaded the auditorium and broke into a *brava* on hearing that Queen Margherita had sent gifts to all the passengers for their Christmas-tree, and that the ardent explorers even in the greatest dangers in the extreme North had faithfully kept the promises made to Her Majesty, not to forget their devotions. When he told with trembling voice how the first Italian flag they saw on returning was at half-mast, and the projection showed a ship approaching the *Stella Polare*, a shudder passed over the audience, and many were unable to keep back their tears when the Duke tried to tell them how the tragic death of the King was announced, and how while the officers and

crew were gathered together a cry of horror and malediction escaped from every heart, from every throat present, which echoed from the ice, in the purity of the vibrant, rarefied atmosphere of the far-away deserted North.

An indescribable applause broke forth in the hall. Finally the Duke made himself heard again, and concluded with a rapid account of the last events, praising the four courageous sailors who raised the Italian flag at the most extreme northern latitude, discovered until that time, shouting: "*Evviva il re! Evviva l'Italia!*" The slide showed the deserted plains, the dark horizon, the mass of ice in which at 52 degrees (centigrade) below zero, the flag with the white cross of Savoia in the centre floated in the wind. While everyone proudly contemplated that slide the courageous young Prince rose, saying: "All honour to our national flag flying at the extreme North, honour to it wherever it may fly! And may it be our task, O sons of Italy, to remember always that it is our duty to carry it high as the advance guard of philanthropy, justice, science, art, and discovery. Always and forever! *Sempre Avanti!*"

There were many other lectures, and many honours conferred on the Duke degli Abruzzi in Rome; and in every city in which he appeared, until his popularity growing day by day he became the idol among the Royal Princes.

In the meanwhile Margherita was partaking of the ineffable joy of the young Sovereigns Vittorio Emanuele and Elena, who gave to the Court, and to the entire population a truly rare example of conjugal happiness, mutual understandings of family needs, and a personal surveillance of all that concerned them.

Long before the baby's arrival, an English nursery governess was engaged to take charge of her, and the greatest care taken in the making of the LAYETTE, while everything hygienic that could be thought of was imported and installed in the room to be occupied by the future Prince or Princess, until in its-modern equipments it resembled an English nursery, an unheard of thing in Italy at that time.

A nurse from the Campagna Romana fed the Princess Jolanda ; the English governess taking charge of the bathing and rest of the little Princess, and often the father or mother were present to assist at her toilette, to laugh over the antics of the healthy child. Jolanda of the black eyes, was brought up with the same hygienic care that is given to any healthy Anglo-Saxon child, instead of being pampered as Italian children usually are.

On November 19th, 1902, there was again great rejoicing at the Quirinale for the birth of the Princess Mafalda, a real Savoian baby this time, of blue eyes and golden hair. As she had done for Jolanda's baptism, Margherita once more took off her mourning, and appeared in the classic white to which she had always been addicted.

When she left off mourning entirely, Margherita considering herself already an old lady, dressed almost entirely in black, or dark colours, which was not a surprise to her friends as her taste in clothes had never been gay. She was quietly elegant, and only on special occasions, when receiving officially some sovereigns visiting Rome, the Diplomatic Corps, or other high dignitaries of State, or the Court, did she put on her emeralds and the marvellous pearls, though

some years later she wore at least one string of pearls at all times.

The two little Princesses were cared for by the same English governess, and often during the winter they were seen driving in the afternoons with the King and Queen. With the coming of spring they were taken to the estate which the King bought for the young family on the hills of Parioli, at St. Philip, close to the Villa Umberto I. This estate once belonged to the Tenfener family, and is now known as the Villa Savoia. It was the delight of the Princesses from the time they were old enough to romp around the lawns and drive in donkey carts, and never did they object to leaving the Quirinale for the quiet of the Roman suburb. The bracing air, the magnificent panorama which the Villa Savoia enjoys makes it a delightful place in the spring when all the surrounding hills are bursting into bloom. The Villa Savoia was used as a refuge from the heat and restriction of the Quirinale when the affairs of State prevented Their Majesties from taking the children to their summer homes, either at Raconigi, or Santa Anna of Valdieri.

The proud grandmother, and what grandmother is not proud, was a frequent visitor at Parioli, renewing her youth in that of the baby Princesses, living over again the days of her own radiant motherhood, planning for their future as she had planned for that of their father. But, Margherita of Savoia, who had been one of the most insistent powers behind the King's refusal to grant the Duke degli Abruzzi permission to marry an American girl, on the ground that a Royal prince has no legal or moral right to step outside of royalty, was to live to see her own

granddaughter do what she had practically forbidden her nephew.

There is an amusing story told of the two young Princesses, Jolanda and Mafalda, at the time of the announcement of Jolanda's engagement to a young officer, member of an ancient aristocratic family, but far removed from royalty. Jolanda is a perfect reproduction of her mother, therefore Montenegrin in type, and no doubt temperament, while Mafalda is Savoian in type, character, and ideals. There was much discussion in Italy over the proposed marriage between the King's eldest daughter and a simple aristocrat. Some Italians were frankly against it, considering it as degrading, while others favoured the democratic ideas being introduced into various Royal families, and believed that by permitting his daughter to marry outside royalty King Vittorio Emanuele would be making a wise step, for after all there were few Royal Princes left in the world, and those few seemed to be either too old or too young for Jolanda. Mafalda took sides with her grandmother, who was most against the match. It is believed that Margherita talked the matter over with her young granddaughter, and persuaded her to discuss it with her sister, which she apparently did as soon as the opportunity presented itself.

Jolanda was in love with her fiancé, and nothing that her sister said had any effect on her, and she laughed when with all the dignity of the ancient Royal regime Mafalda announced: "Of course, Jolanda, you are free to marry whom you please, and being Montenegrin, you will naturally choose to marry outside of royalty! But I—" she tossed her pretty blonde head—"I am Savoian, and I shall marry a

Royal Prince or remain a virgin Princess all my life."

Mafalda of Savoia married Prince Philip of Hess.

After many oppositions and difficulties of every sort, it seemed that the feminine problems in Italy were to be resolved with dignity, and not to be allowed to fall into the ridiculous exaggerations that sometimes make their appearance in other countries. With the approbation and encouragement of Margherita of Savoia, one presently saw institutions and societies of real civil importance rising.

First a federation for the promoting of feminine activities was organised by Countess Lavinia Taverna, a lady-in-waiting to Queen Margherita, who was acting president as well as organiser. Esteemed and universally loved, the President of the Federation soon drew the best feminine energy of the capital. Shortly after that a consolidation with the National Council of the Italian women was brought about.

This new organisation suggested similar organisations to help the women to an understanding of a useful existence outside, as well as in the home.

All this work towards the emancipation of the women may seem of little importance to English and American women, who for so many years have enjoyed practically equal rights, even though they did have to fight hard for them at the beginning, but to the Latin races, the movement aided and abetted by Margherita of Savoia was a great one, and a movement that could never have been brought about unless aided by one of the first ladies of the land. The fruit of this emancipation movement is now being appreciated by the Italian women of all classes, who in many instances are

surpassing their men in intellectual attainments and freedom of thought and legal power. Yet this evolution has not made them less womanly, less motherly, for in no country in the world are the women so gloriously prolific as in Italy, and not even in Germany is there such an enormous young population.

To show her appreciation of the splendid work being done by the women's associations, Margherita wrote a letter to the Society of Feminine Industry, a letter which has been carefully preserved in the archives :

"I think that the beautiful is everywhere, in the most humble things as in the grandest, for beauty is in our souls, in our minds, in our hearts. And it is from the mind and from the heart that one must take it and infuse it in the work of the hands, so that the simplest and the most modest women's work can gather to itself a reflection ; a ray of the inner beauty, and thus become a true and beautiful work of art.

MARGHERITA."

Young King Vittorio Emanuele III was very Liberal in his views, and in his speech. And in the days before the war when Kings were still monarchs he was very democratic.

Shortly after the Queen Mother settled in Rome, Vittorio Emanuele made a most startling speech before the Senate, a speech that completely upset his monarchistic followers, who knew of his Liberal ideas but never dreamed that he would make them public. The following day one of the Ministers, a rabid monarchist, sent a demand for a special private audience with the Queen Mother.

"Your Majesty," he said in the course of their

conversation, "I must ask you to use your influence with His Majesty, your son. If he continues to make Liberal speeches such as the one he made a few days ago the dynasty will certainly fall."

"My influence with the King?" Margherita laughed heartily, though perhaps a trifle bitterly. "I thought you knew that my son says what he thinks and does what he believes is right for the good and betterment of conditions in our country. You may sometimes wonder at his Liberal actions and speeches, but I do not, for nothing that he does astonishes me—why, were I to see him go down the steps of the Quirinale with a red socialist's hat on, I should only wonder why he had not done it before."

In the spring of 1903, King Edward VII of England, Kaiser William, Emperor of Germany, and that supreme genius and sanctified glory of modern Italy, Guglielmo Marconi, visited Rome. There were excursions to surrounding points of interest, general festivities, and official receptions for these Royal guests, among them that given at the Campidoglio was stupendous. The Municipality arranged this in honour of Kaiser William of Germany, and even he was stupefied by the magnificence, and declared that at Berlin he would never be able to offer anything similar to Vittorio Emanuele.

This reception in the most historic palace of Rome, the most celebrated hill of ancient Rome, the hill that was made into its present state by several architects after various plans by Michelangelo, assumed the aspect of a fantastic feast of a bygone age. Illuminated by thousands of electric lights the Museum Hall of Sculpture, overflowing with antique and priceless

works of art, appeared to be peopled by a strange ethereal beauty in all the eternal purity of the most perfect human forms. Besides this marvel the open windows offered a sublime spectacle to the guests:

The monumental ruins of the Foro, the Palatini with its cypresses, the Coliseum, with its arches of fascinating harmony, all mysteriously rising out of the dense obscurity of the night into the light cast shadow-like from the many windows, composed an indescribable vision of unearthly beauty.

The foreign sovereigns, Edward VII and William II long remembered that night in May.

After the official festivities were over the King of England, and the Emperor of Germany called at the Margherita Palace to present their respects to the Queen Mother, as the Kaiser said: "We all loved Margherita in her youth, and I think, if she is like her name flower, she will not wilt, rather will she, when the time comes, quietly curl up her petals and die. And like the pearl, her stone, she will never lose her lustre. Therefore I must see Margherita!"

For this festive occasion Margherita, surrounded by her ancient Court, again began the big official receptions for which her Court had been famous in the past, and for which the Margherita palace was celebrated until the second year of the World War. With the majesty of her comportment idealized through suffering, she became in truth the definition of Carducci's celebrated phrase: "A Palazzo e Regina." (In the palace she is Queen.)

The two foreign sovereigns after having enjoyed all the festivities offered in their honour, expressed a desire to be received by Pope Leone XIII. However,



H.R.H. UMBERTO—PRINCE OF PIEMONTE
Marzherita's grandson

it was impossible for them to be presented at the Vatican while they were guests at the Quirinale. Therefore, the two great and popular rulers regretfully departed from the Royal palace, where they had been so delightfully entertained, to their respective Embassies, in order to take the political significance from their stay in Rome and so be able to pass the sacred door of the Vatican as private citizens.

Guglielmo Marconi, like all other prophets, up to that time had received very little honour in his own country. Marconi was born in Bologna in 1874, of an Italian father and an Irish mother, who was very understanding of her son's needs, and it was thanks to her appreciation of his ideas that he was able to find his first help in England; though in the spring of 1895, at Pontecchio, in the northern part of Italy, the radio-telegraph was born.

Marconi had discovered that two metal wires placed almost vertically on the ground and at a certain distance apart constituted a grand oscillation in which the variations of electric power directed perpendicularly to the earth and the variations of the associated magnetic forces, parallel to the surface of the earth, produced perturbations in the electro-magnetic equilibrium of the cosmic ether, perturbations that theoretically and practically respond to the irradiation laws of a wavy movement and for that reason are conventionally called "electro-magnetic waves."

It was by means of the rhythmic transmission and reception of more or less long groups of electro-magnetic waves that Marconi first obtained verified effects at a distance without any artificial connection.

Many things were revealed by this experiment, and shortly a transmitter was attached to a window of the

hay loft and the receiver a few feet away, on a hill facing the villa of Pontecchio.

With the help of a modest peasant, and the waving of a simple handkerchief, Marconi succeeded in transmitting certain letters of the Morse alphabet. And day by day he worked and studied the primitive apparatus, until it became a real invention.

Through her parents' interest in him, Marconi's mother obtained in England the first necessary help for the official trial of his invention. And the mother who had assisted at most of his experimental work, followed her son until his invention was definitely launched and on its triumphant way.

From the time he was eighteen Marconi had often been in contact with sovereigns, ministers, ambassadors, admirals, generals, and eminent political, scientific, and financial personalities. So, from a young man he was used to consider social problems from a sufficiently high point of view, and when he was nominated Senator by direct order of King Vittorio Emanuele, when exactly forty years old, he was politically prepared to participate in the most important discussions.

In every country he had visited up to 1903 honours had been showered upon him, the inventor who, though born of an Irish mother was nevertheless son of an Italian, was a monarchist, a loyal patriot, and yet Italy had done nothing to show her pride in so great a son.

In May 1903, Marconi came to Rome as a conquering hero, after having been helped to develop and actuate the wonders of his discoveries in foreign countries.

Italy's lack of appreciation and encouragement of the inventor was always shameful in Margherita's

eyes, and she was therefore most anxious to have the past mistakes erased from the historic records. The morning of May 8th, 1903, the honorary citizenship of the city of Rome was conferred on Marconi, as a mere beginning of the honours that were later to be showered upon him. The impressive ceremony took place at the Campidoglio, where the inventor was accompanied by his mother and brother. The following day Queen Margherita gave a private audience to Marconi, with his mother and brother, keeping them in animated conversation for several hours, glorying with his family in his success as a man and an Italian.

Whatever Marconi may have thought of the reception given him by the Queen Mother, and certainly he was delighted with her interest and encouragement, the impression she made on Signora Marconi, the inventor's mother was, that if they had gone to Margherita of Savioa in the days when he needed help to perfect his work, through her it would have been possible for Italy to have had all the glory of the inventions that were to revolutionise the world.

England knighted Marconi, while his own country, from where his glory must always be reflected over the world, permitted him to remain a simple man of the bourgeoisie, until he was nominated Senator, which after all is only a political title.

After the Marconis left, Margherita turned to a lady-in-waiting, and remarked seriously: "If I had anything to say about it I should nominate that great man to the Senate, and confer a title on him. Genius should be recognised by all. The King could easily create a title for him such as Count Senza Fila (wireless) or Duke dei Pochi Parole (of few words)."

Marconi is reputed to be rather a silent man, and no

doubt that day at the Margherita palace he had little to say, preferring to leave the conversation to Her Majesty and his mother.

On July 20th, 1903, while Italy was celebrating the Saint's day of Margherita of Savoia, after a long illness Pope Leone XIII passed away at Rome. The festivities, following Margherita's express wishes, instantly ceased.

Once again the Conclave was held at the Vatican, this time, different from the preceding, the Cardinals were not agreed on the successor. Interminable days followed. Crowds from every walk of life went to visit the bier of His Holiness, Leone XIII, resting in the crypt of St. Peter's. And every day crowds waited in the streets to hear the proclamation of the new Pontiff.

In the vast monumental square surrounding St. Peter's and the Vatican, there were lines of Italian soldiers, and from the open windows above the bronze door the Swiss Guards of the Vatican in their medieval angelesque uniforms walked about with the artistic halberd, stopping from time to time to look out, and sometimes exchanging a fraternal word with the Italian soldiers below.

Ministers, senators, diplomats, journalists, artists, and society women along with working people filled the square each day, talking together animatedly, until high up from the little chimney above the Vatican a spiral of smoke appeared, the *fumata*, which showed the disappointed crowd that the voting of the day was being burned, as the Cardinals had not succeeded in choosing a new Pope.

The *fumata* signified that the election work would be resumed the next day, and so the public after

watching the spiral of smoke a few minutes slowly poured out of the square, leaving the Italian soldiers to watch alone. Thus a fortnight passed, and then the Patriarch of Venice was proclaimed Pope. Guiseppe Sarto, the pastor of the humble and benign soul, born at Riese, in 1835, devoted to the House of Savoia; unambitious, sincere believer in the Catholic and Liberal citizens of Italy, fulfilled the hopes of all for a Pope who would not consider himself as a State prisoner, and who would bless the country by becoming a part of it, instead of remaining like his predecessor, apart from it.

From the time of the election of Pope Leone XIII in 1878, until his death, the ideas of a reconciliation between the State and Church had made great strides in Italy, as was shown on the death of Umberto I, when the Italian bishopric expressed its horror over the assassination, and its respect and devotion to the country, and to the House of Savoia.

It was touching and comforting to see the attitude taken by the bishopric and the clergy in Italy; it was a certain triumph of religious and patriotic sentiment. The most deeply felt of all those manifestations was that of the Archbishop of Cremona, who exhorted the "brothers and sons of the Church" to keep close to the flag of authority, to follow the new King, for though the King was dead, the monarchy could not die. Vittorio Emanuele would take up the paternal heritage, and with it gather unto himself the devotion and the love of his people.

On the day of the election no one could keep back his emotion before the old Pontiff who opened his great heart to the hopes of all, who so personified pious bounty, and seemed almost ashamed to be raised

above his fellow priests on to the papal chair. In his simplicity he would have preferred to retain the old duties, and it was only the duty of following the established uses that had induced him to accept the election.

From that day the world at large felt that in Pio X they had a Pope who was against personal pomp and grandeur, whose humility was a true sign of a follower of Christ, an example for the Church as compared to worldly governments. He was the first Pope to abolish the traditional kissing of the foot on the throne, and instead of appearing in regal splendour in receiving, he managed to present himself humbly benevolent, finding saintly consoling words for all who visited him, invariably helping suffering humanity, and often giving a new faith in the life to come.

Margherita had great respect for Cardinal Sarto, and was always in close contact with him. During the years that he was cardinal they were believed to have had many long and intimate talks on the subject of the reconciliation which they both hoped for. It is said on good authority that she often went to the Vatican after he became Pope, entering unobserved by a side door leading directly to His Holiness's private apartments. These political and religious conferences were long, for they sometimes remained closeted for hours.

An Italian, and a sincere Catholic could have only one dream for the betterment of the country and the advancement of the Church, and whatever may have been Queen Margherita's ideas as an ardent Catholic and an admirer of the Pope's, it is certain that a discussion of the ways and means of bringing about the longed-for union of State and Church would be her chief reason for the clandestine visits.

Believing that it would be better for all concerned, in 1905 Pio X proceeded to the political organisation of the Catholics, practically abolishing the *non expedit*, and two weeks later the Parliament approved the project of a law for the separation of the Church from the State.

And only three years after her death, under Pope Poi XI, what Margherita of Savioa had so anxiously waited and worked for came to pass.

As Catholic as she was, Margherita was never intolerant or narrow-minded. One day she interrupted a woman who was speaking unkindly of Protestants and Jews, saying that she had known many good Protestants and Jews also, whose hearts were filled with the milk of human kindness, and a charity more truly Christian than that of many Catholics.

Shortly after the election of the new Pope, while the papers and all Italy were singing his praises, Margherita had slipped away to the mountains, and was preparing to open the Royal villa at Gressoney, King Umberto's last gift to her.

Gressoney is at the foot of Monte Rosa, in the beautiful Val d'Aosta, Italian Alps, and with the two villages of Saint Jean and Trinite is a favourite summer resort for all lovers of the mountains. Life is very simple, almost primitive there, so simple that one feels the sensation of being in quite another world. From childhood Margherita preferred Gressoney to any other place, and it was there that one of the romantic episodes of her life took place.

She was passing a short holiday at Gressoney, incognito, so as to be free to do as she pleased. Dressed in her picturesque peasant's costume she passed among the

many summer visitors as a very lovely young woman of exceptional charm who was no doubt capricious, otherwise with her rare beauty she would not have been dressed as she was. Charming, they agreed she was, but none of them had an idea of her identity.

Among the various distinguished men and women who made up the daily excursions into the mountains, was a young Austrian nobleman. Each day he managed to be near Margherita, ready to offer his hand during some particularly steep ascent or descent. So devoted was he that many of the young women staying at the various hotels and villas were casting envious eyes at the unknown Princess and hoping that she would go away soon so as to give them a chance with the handsome man, who among other things was reputed to be very rich. Margherita was not flirtatious, in fact she never was, but she was healthy and natural, and the rare air of the Alps had a way of lifting her spirit above all earthly misery, and of giving her a mystic something that she did not possess when at home in the cities.

The young Austrian gentleman continued his ardent attentions to the beautiful young woman from Turin, and quite unexpectedly he learned that some day she would have to marry a King, or at least a Crown Prince, and that she would sometime or another be a Queen, while he . . .

He learned of her real identity in the evening, and the next day they were planning a climb to Monte Rosa.

The day was clear, the sun shone with a warm autumn splendour. Margherita of Savoia, in her peasant's dress stood on a peak of Monte Rosa, "looking out over the world," as she expressed it. The

Austrian nobleman was beside her. He had hurried her up the mountain side, hurried her so fast that all their companions were left far behind.

"I learned last night," he said simply, "that you are not only a Royal princess, but that you are a niece of the King, and will one day be the wife of a Crown Prince, and that your uncle, King Vittorio Emanuele will never permit you to marry out of Royalty—even if you were unambitious enough to wish to—to marry for love. I love you—and one day you must be a Queen! I love you," he ran on without giving her time to speak, "and had you been the simple girl I believed you to be, I should have asked you to be my wife. Now that I know—know that you are a future Queen. . . ." Suddenly he threw his fair head back proudly, "there is only one way for me to prove the depth of my love and devotion for you!"

Before Margherita realised what he intended to do he had drawn a revolver out of his pocket and fired into his heart, dropped backwards and over the precipice, even before the report of the shot reached those others climbing gaily up the mountain side.

He was of a distinguished Austrian family, young and rich. How account for the accident? Where he had stood with the Princess Margherita there was sunshine; wild flowers were growing on the uneven mountain paths, on the farthest peaks there was ice and snow. If he had fallen from that other peak he would merely have been another Alpine climber lost in the ice and snow.

The shock must have been a terrible one for Margherita, who had never done anything to encourage the young Austrian, for she was too kind-hearted to encourage any man unless she knew that she could

respond to his affection. The matter of the suicide on the mountain was never discussed with anyone, for only those who happened to be at Gressoney that day ever knew the true story.

There in the Royal villa at Gressoney, surrounded by the vast eternal Alps, Margherita found a new and un hoped for peace. The villa was full of memories, it is true, and so were the nearby villages, where there were still many who had known her from childhood, who had known her father, Prince Ferdinando. She thought and dreamed of the days when, tireless hunter that he was, he had so enjoyed his favourite sport of deer hunting in the vastness of the mountains. And there at Gressoney she found many tender souvenirs of her husband, souvenirs that the city seemed to have taken from her. Then there were memories of other loved ones who had at some time crossed her path, crossed it and gone Beyond.

There she felt old with the weight of her memories, young as compared to the strange snow-capped mountains. Before the contemplation of her memories, before the sovereign spectacle of the mountains, she seemed to find herself again, to recover from the lethargy that had been weighing her down in Rome, despite her efforts to overcome it. At Gressoney she found the serenity of spirit, the strength of hope, incomparable force of the most bitter suffering; there she knew that she needed to continue to live her life as she knew Umberto would have wanted her to live it.

She had returned to the active life of the capital because she felt it was her duty, but underneath the smiling surface the scars in the noble heart still throbbed and a secret resentment against the cruelty of fate still

gnawed. At Gressoney her faith in the justice of Providence returned. And to that faith we owe the prayer written shortly after she heard of the Alpine soldiers being lost in an avalanche :

“ PRAYER TO THE MADONNA ”

“ O Virgin Mother of God whom the daring mountaineers invoke as the Madonna of the eternal snow. O Signora of the high mountains, deign to turn Thine eyes towards those glittering white spaces which, so immaculate and white, seem as the quivering hems of Thy pure veil. Mitigate the horrors of the way for those who must cross the cruel ice, help them over the dangerous paths, and if one of them fails to accomplish his task, receive his departing spirit in Thy piteous arms, render sweet and tender the cold sheet over him, and make, I pray Thee, the soul so quickly abandoning its terrestrial garments rise in like manner to the Throne of God.

“ Thou, O Virgin Saint, hear my prayer, search for the good actions in those brave lives, find again the generous thoughts they had in their hearts, and scatter them, as one scatters sweet scented flowers from the mountains, before the Throne of God, so that when the souls arrive before their Maker, they may be received with infinite pity, and the light that gilds the mountain peaks, emanation of that Eternal Divinity, surround them in its glorious peace forever more. So be it.”

The Royal villa at Gressoney was not Government property, as so many were inclined to believe, for King Umberto bought it personally from Count P——, who during each visit made by Margherita to the villa was in constant attendance upon Her Majesty.

Those who believed, or who liked to talk about Queen Margherita's so-called love affairs, and that every man who looked at her was in love with her, insisted that quite naturally Count P—— had fallen a victim to Margherita's charms. This may or may not have been true. In any case he was at Gressoney to welcome her when as a widow she again opened the villa.

Count P—— was at that time suffering from serious heart trouble, and his doctor had forbidden him to do any climbing as the high altitude was bad for him ; in fact, he had been advised to leave Gressoney. But when Queen Margherita arranged an expedition into the mountains he never allowed his illness to keep him at home—for what was his life compared to the Queen's pleasure ?

Edelweiss was one of her favourite flowers ; edelweiss could only be found on the mountain side. And faithful to the end, Count P—— passed away with a bit of it in his hand.

Many indeed were her souvenirs of the Alps.

CHAPTER XIII

PRE-WAR ACTIVITY

"THE busiest lady in Italy" Margherita of Savoia was called as she flitted from one good work to another, from Rome to Gressoney, to Parioli for a day with the baby princesses, a drive in the Villa Borghese, the inauguration of an art exhibition at Florence, or a few days in the glorious winter sunshine at Bordighera.

At last the day of all days of her middle life dawned, when on September 15th, 1904, at Raconigi, a Crown Prince was born to the House of Savoia, a prince who was to be adored by his grandmother to be the joy and comfort of her declining years.

Vittorio Emanuele gave his first son the name of his august father, Umberto, and the title of Prince of Piemonte, which according to the constitution of the House of Savoia must be consecrated to the heir to the throne.

The Italians who were devoted to the monarchy rejoiced over the birth of a long-desired heir-apparent, and their gentle hearts were touched on learning that Queen Elena had received, contrary to all Italian precedence, the King's permission to herself nurse the new-born baby. Strange as it may seem to most Anglo-Saxon women, the men in Italy have never believed in having their wives a slave to the intimate care of their children, and all who can afford it engage a *balia*, usually a healthy peasant woman who has a

young baby of her own, to take charge of and feed the newly born until such time as it can properly be fed on artificial milk. But somehow His Majesty understood that a mother might find a superior joy in feeding her child herself, and that when she was strong and healthy the child could only profit physically and mentally by this natural nourishment,

Queen Elena's decision to nurse the Royal baby started a controversy among the women of the Roman aristocracy. Some approved and admired the Queen for being a natural mother, while others considered it a manifestation of peasant origin (the Montenegrins have always been looked upon as the peasants of Europe), for never before had a rich Italian woman dared to defy tradition by nursing her own child, even though it might have benefited her as well as the child, for the Campagna Romana was overflowing with beautiful, healthy young peasant women who seemed to have babies as often as nature permitted in order to be ready to care for the children of the rich. However, Queen Elena's example was eventually followed by several prominent women, and the *balia* only engaged when it was necessary.

On this subject, which appeared almost in the light of an ultra-modern idea to her, the Queen Mother was silent.

Two years passed, and already the little Prince Umberto was beginning to make his personality felt by everyone, and most of all by his *nonna*, who called him her "little man," and whose first and every thought was for the beautiful dark boy so exactly like the Montenegrin family in looks, so Savoian in mentality.

On August 1st, 1906, a committee of the Cavaliers

of the Order of Malta, was received at Raconigi, by Queen Elena, who with the Queen Mother had been given the Grand Cross of the Order. To understand the importance and significance of this fact one must know the original constitution of the Order of Malta. To begin with, the dignity of Grand Master can only be conferred by the Pope on one of the Cavaliers of the Order, and the Grand Master in turn confers the Order on others.

Among the first memorable acts of Pope Pio X, and one that caused both surprise and pleasure, was the confirming of the election to Grand Master of Count di Thun, who the Pope knew well was devoted to the House of Savoia. Thus it became evident to all that Pio X was permitting, and perhaps even wished, the two Queens to receive the Grand Cross of the Order of Malta, and Cardinal Rampolla, who was the Grand Prior of the Order in Rome, undoubtedly contributed towards the conferring of this high homage on the first two ladies of Italy.

When this Order is to be conferred on any sovereign, it is necessary for His Holiness, the Pope, and the Secretary of State at the Vatican (at this time it was the Cardinal Merry del Val), not only to approve it, but communicate the *nilhil abstat* to the Supreme Corporation. The event of the conferring of the Order on the two Queens thus marked an important date in the annals of the Order, and also in the existing relations between the Vatican and the Court of Italy.

About this time there was an ardent awakening of pedagogic studies, encouraged by the intelligentsia, as well as by the sovereigns.

Teachers' schools were founded, and the great need of all time penetrated by the young scientist Maria

Montessori, who after practical and theoretical studies and visits to the educational institutes at home and abroad, succeeded in constructing a scientific pedagogy of the practical needs of each child. This was a system for developing instinctive qualities and correcting natural defects. And what the schools of Milan and Rome did for the high school teachers was to be done for the elementary school teachers. This practical idea needed a special field, for it was one thing to prepare the teachers, but without schools in which to teach the new system the system would be of no use. Where and how were the methods to be tried out ?

After much unsuccessful searching Eduardo Talamo, who was ever ready to embrace all ideas of social regeneration, and who was then the head of the flourishing *Istituto Romano di Bene Stabile*, an institution thought out, founded and managed by him, was found to be the man who best understood and generously helped the aspirations of Maria Montessori.

The Montessori methods were eventually taken up in several primary schools and day nurseries, patronised by the Queen Mother and Queen Elena, as well as by many prominent Roman ladies. And this method has since been adopted practically all over the world.

A new mourning came upon Italy when at Bologna, on February 17th, 1907, the sublime poet Giosue Carducci died.

In every part of the peninsula, from the farthest provinces, from every centre of immigration came words of regret for the loss of the man who, by his inspired words, had done so much for the new art in Italy.

" In all his life and in all his works Giosue Carducci



THE QUEEN MOTHER
In 1923

always knew how to set himself ruthlessly, implacably against conventional dilettantism, the false, the frivolous, the superficial, in defence of the great classic art nourished by hard study and high idealism. His work was never the amusement of small and odious minds, but rather the legitimate expressions, superb in their greatness of thought, and human sentiments that reached the fountain-head of life; trusting in life, and in life finding the 'ragione d'essere,' the goal." (From an article on Carducci by Guido Vitali.)

In his youth, Carducci might have been considered rather a rough type of man, for in his social life he ran away from conventionalism and the homage to form. But in his latter years the great poet was an assiduous visitor to the literary salon of the Countess Ersilia Caetani-Lovatelli. He dined frequently at the Academy dei Lincei, where intimate friends could be gathered about him, friends who, outside of the usual mundane curiosity, really interested him. His natural frankness made him flee from formal receptions or banquets, where he was expected to appear in a gentleman's evening clothes, indulge in polite small talk, or to make a brilliant speech. None of those things met with his ideas of living, and therefore on the plea of some important work to finish, or ill health, he managed to avoid almost all society, except that of his favourite friend the Countess Lovatelli.

It was at one of the informal evenings at the Lovatelli home that Carducci met the Baron de Beldt, historian and diplomat, who did so much towards having the Swedish Academy grant Carducci the Nobel Prize.

Perhaps no one in the world more sincerely mourned Carducci than the Queen Mother. She had, as she expressed it, worn mourning in her heart for many

great men, but none had been deeper than that for the grand poet, who had directly and indirectly stood for great moments in her life, moments far greater to her than the world had ever dreamed, for among all her friends, close and distant, very few ever really understood the depth of her sentimental nature; probably only one woman ever did, and not more than two or three men. Carducci had understood it, perhaps because there was a certain soul harmony between them. He could express in writing the beauty of her thoughts and by her appreciation of his own sentiments she inspired him to even better ones.

Margherita of Savoia, who had inspired Carducci to such high poetic concepts and deep devotion, who had been the noblest of friends during all the years that he had known her, aiding him with exquisite delicacy in difficult moments, and there were many, suffered greatly over his untimely death, feeling instinctively that had he been better off materially he might have lived longer. It was the loss of a loving friend, a man whose great soul and genius had often come very close to her soul, and too, he was another of the many who had at some time loved her, and was irrevocably gone from her daily thoughts.

Some years before, when Margherita learned that Carducci had decided to sell the library so lovingly collected, and knowing with what sorrow he would part with his adored books, she had asked Count Nivio de' Medici to make an offer for the library in her name. She bought it for exactly double the price asked by the poet, and then made it a life gift to him. The gift gladdened the last years of Carducci, and though he rarely saw the Queen Mother then, his thoughts of her, usually as he first saw her, in the "dove grey-

violet dress, no throne in the room, yet enthroned," often came to him, and among his literary friends he frequently turned to conversation of her. Once, this was very near the end, he was heard to say: "Women have played their parts in my life, and one among them stands out clearly, vividly, vitally. Because of her I have loved all the others less, yet I have not loved her more—for she is not a woman to be loved by such as I—but rather a woman to be worshipped by all—and she, she, the woman I would have dared to love had I been a king, is . . ."

Few there were who doubted the truth of his words, few who did not know that Margherita of Savoja was the woman he would have loved had he been a king.

In the library bought by the Queen Mother were all of Carducci's manuscripts, written in pencil or ink, for the prosaic typewriter was not used then; many documents and important correspondence.

After Carducci's death the library again came into Margherita's possession, and knowing how dear it was, how sacred to the Italians, she presented it to the city of Bologna.

To render the gift still more precious Margherita also bought the house in which the poet had lived for some years, and where he wrote so many of his admirable works. The property was situated between Porta Mazzini and Porta Santa Stefano, an ancient house in a little garden with cypress trees surrounding it that had been the habitation of the company of Santa Barbara and of Santa Maria della Pietà from 1403 to 1798, and from then until Carducci took it in 1890 scarcely lived in.

The window of the poet's study looked out over the plains and the rising sun. In this study Giosue Carducci

lay closed in a simple spruce casket, in memory of one of his marvellous sonnets. . . .

Carducci was born in Tuscany, but almost all of his life had been passed in Bologna, the city that he had made so particularly his own, so what more appropriate than for Bologna to have his library ?

It is told how for many days after the death of Carducci, Margherita's eyes were constantly dimmed by tears, and that it was long before his name could be mentioned in her presence. Thus it is shown that a Queen may love in her heart, but she is seldom permitted to be a woman and to step down from her pedestal.

The profound impression of sadness that was diffused in Rome by the death of Carducci was seen in a reunion of many deputies at Montecitorio when the President of the Senate announced officially, and with visible emotion, that Parliament was closed in sign of national mourning, and that representatives of the Senate would attend the poet's funeral.

From every part of Italy, and other countries as well, innumerable telegrams were sent to the Carducci family, the University of Bologna, and the Mayor of the city. Queen Margherita telegraphed to the Mayor: " My sadness is associated with the sadness of Bologna, which is the sadness and mourning of the entire nation. Italy has lost a great citizen, but his thoughts will always be with us, made immortal in his works."

All Italy went to Bologna to pay tribute to him who sung her glory.

On February 27th, 1907, Marchese Tanari, Mayor of Bologna, received the following autographed letter from Her Majesty Margherita of Savoia :

SIGNOR SINDACO :

"I take pleasure in announcing the gift to the city of Bologna of the house where Giosue Carducci lived the last years of his life, and with it the library that he had collected. Bologna, that offered Carducci affectionate hospitality for many years, and surrounded him with so much admiration, I am sure will know how to faithfully care for this souvenir of the greatest poet of modern Italy.

"I send you, Signor Sindaco, the sentiments of my highest consideration.

"MARGHERITA."

Professor Lionello Venturi, Senator and author of some twenty-four books on Italian art, was informed that a Bronzino owned by an aristocratic family of Florence, had been put on the market. He at once went to Florence from Rome to see the painting for himself, not believing that any Italian, no matter how poor, would permit a Bronzino to be taken out of the country. He found the painting as fine as any in the Galleries, and that a million lire had been offered for it.

"A million lire before the war," said Professor Venturi, "was a great deal of money, about two hundred thousand dollars. The offer came from an American collector, and was a bona fide one. The owners of the magnificent painting were poor—so was I, when it was a question of advancing such a sum. What was I to do? I returned to Rome, and asked for an audience with Queen Margherita, feeling sure that she would come to the rescue. I saw her a few days later, explained the whole matter, and was

authorised to ask the owners of the painting to hold it for a few days. In less than a month a million lire had been raised by subscription, which the Queen Mother naturally headed, and the Bronzino was saved for Italy."

Professor Venturi recounts many other incidents of the Queen Mother's patriotism and loyalty to Italy, and says that had more people consulted her in time of need, there would be fewer valuable Italian works of art in the United States.

Successive years brought many new joys to the Queen Mother. After Umberto, the joy of her eyes and of her soul, came the lively Giovanna, and the beautiful little Maria. When on New Year's morning they all came together to the Margherita palace to wish her a Happy New Year, a crowd always waited at the entrance to cheer them as they came out, while a venerated white head appeared at the window to catch a last glimpse of them as they went away.

At about five-thirty on the morning of December 28th, 1908, a terrible cataclysm destroyed the cities of Messina and Reggio-Calabria. With the crash of thousands of stones jumping from the hills near Calabria, a sort of luminous aurora borealis, with the rapidity of a flash of lightning spent itself on Messina. In less than no time the earth was as though touched by a magic wand; a tremor, an upheaving, a shock from the very bowels of the earth, a spasmodic contraction, great crevices opened—then a howl of terror, a formidable groan, long and fearful, that seemed to rise to the stars. It was the howl, the groaning of thousands of victims who had been

carried ruthlessly from their homes, devoured, buried under the debris of the immense indescribable ruins made by the earthquake there, and in the nearby cities and villages on either side. An impenetrable darkness substituted the thousands of electric lights that only a few minutes before had been burning in Messina, Calabria, Villa San Giovanni, and Palmi, lights that had been put out in a second by the breaking of electric wires and destruction of the power houses. Suddenly in the midst of the terrifying darkness a vivid rosy light was over all, and in a twinkling flames were shooting up in every direction from the bursting gas pipes. In the Razza del Municipio gas was escaping from the broken pipes. The harbour was invaded by every kind of fishing boat, rubbish, beds, bits of wrecked ships, tables, chairs, food, linens, corpses, and animals swimming desperately in the bellowing waves. The quay of the superb Corso Vittorio Emanuele was almost submerged at one point, with bent electric light poles rising from the water, while at certain spots beyond, the quay was elevated at least ten feet.

The news of this disaster aroused an immense pity in the entire civilised world. Russian and English boats brought the first aid, and they united with French battleships. The King and Queen rushed immediately to the scenes of inhuman suffering, giving help and comfort. Subscriptions were opened on all sides, while squadrons of volunteer nurses came from every part of Italy, and also from foreign countries. Their Majesties having given two hundred thousand lire at the first announcement of the earthquake, a week later gave a million. The Spanish Court voted two hundred thousand lire. There was a noble and

generous match between all nations to come to the aid of the unfortunate victims of the immense disaster of Messina and Reggio-Calabria.

Certain things have a way of standing out in one's memory, scenes and events of youth that have a lasting effect, and all unconsciously lead our footsteps in after life. The writer was quite young at the time of the Messina earthquake, and she was not at all fond of reading the daily papers. She lived in New York, and all her father's friends were much interested in the vivid accounts of the horrors of that early December morning, 1908. Subscriptions were being made to help the sufferers and each day the latest accounts of the disaster in the papers were read and discussed. The young woman, who was to be the author of this book, one day took a paper to her room, just to see what it was all about, and read the latest reports on the devastated region. I think she must have been thrilled by the account of the goodness of the King and Queen of Italy, and then her eye fell on the name of another Queen, just the Queen Mother, who was called Margherita, who though not young had gone to the ruined city in the hope of helping to cheer the wounded and comfort the dying. Queen Margherita was not expected to be there in Messina, because she was not the reigning Queen, but she was nevertheless much beloved, and the other Queen, the real Queen, was a good and beautiful woman, but the paper wrote less enthusiastically of her. For many days following this young woman spent hours, wasted hours her father said, reading about Queen Margherita; read and dreamed as romantic young women are apt to dream about a Queen, until a great wish grew in her heart to see the lovely Queen who was kind to the poor

and suffering, who spent her life in doing good, and who was beloved by all.

The realisation of that wish came nine years later, and the writing of this book is simply a young woman's dream that has come true.

In September new troubles came upon the Colonies, and the prospect of a war in Libia cast an ominous shadow over all of Italy. A Royal decree dated November 5th, proclaimed Tripolitania and Cerenaca under the full sovereignty of the kingdom of Italy. Communications of this decree were given to all the European powers, and at the same time they were published in Tripoli, and in the other cities of Libia. The socialist party in Italy protested against the undertaking by a series of general strikes, which fortunately failed completely.

At the very beginning the Libian enterprise turned out splendidly. The Italian fleet, commanded by the Duke degli Abruzzi, destroyed several enemy torpedoes at Prevesa—then suddenly the operations stopped. Admiral Augusto Aubry died, and his successor Admiral Faravelli issued a proclamation to the inhabitants of Tripoli, in which he announced the capture of the city.

Then the Turkish and Arabic garrisons offered a tenacious and insidious resistance instigated in the name of the common Islamic faith, which gave rise to severe conflicts, many painful surprises and much treason. Many *bersagliere*, worn out with fighting, were at one time surrounded by the enemy at Scaira Sciat, and mutilated or crucified by the ferocious Turks and Arabs. The Government replied to this atrocity by raising the crucifix in the Piazza del Pane, at Tripoli.

Not yet having suffered sufficiently in the knowledge of the war going on in Libia, and the terrible mutilations taking place there, another needless worry came upon Queen Margherita, when on March 14th, at Rome, an attempt was made on her son's life.

It seemed to everyone that like his father, Vittorio Emanuele III could not have an enemy in the world, that he was kind and good to his subjects, and that they could only wish him well ; yet, on the Corso, in front of the Doria palace, a bricklayer, a certain Antonio d'Alba by name, shot three times at the Royal carriage as Their Majesties were returning from a celebration at the Pantheon. The bullets that were aimed at the King missed him and one entered the neck of Cavalier Lang, chief of the *córazzieri*. An hour later Senators, Deputies and citizens of every class improvised a demonstration in the Quirinale Square. As usual, the King and Queen appeared on the balcony, amidst hilarious shouts of joy. This demonstration was repeated in every part of the country, and also at Tripoli, in the mosques and synagogues, where solemn functions of thanks for the preservation of the King's life were celebrated.

The war continued to rage in Libia, great loss of life being reported on both sides. From March to July there were continuous battles on land, on sea, and in the air. An ardent advance in the region of Gheran was followed several days later by the bombardment of the Turkish camps by the Italian battleships *Piemonte* and *Caprera*. Other battles on land and sea brought many prisoners to the Italians, and a considerable loss of life as well, and then came the Sultan's decision to end the war, which had proved to be a losing

one, and if continued might be completely disastrous to his already weakened nation.

Italy was also ready for peace ; in fact, peace was becoming a necessity, as the country needed a free hand to prepare for newer and graver events that were drawing near, and that were eventually to involve the greater part of the civilised world.

Lausanne was chosen as the proper setting for the changing of power, and the signing of the preliminary peace terms.

Queen Margherita, who so loved travelling, had become almost a home body since her widowhood, and there were various reasons for that. First, she had reached middle age—that delicious time of retrospection when life has a past and still holds some hope for the future ; that time when a woman is like a peach in full bloom, perhaps a bit overripe, but not quite ready for the decay known as old age ; the time when a woman holds to youth with an intensity that she would have thought impossible when young, when she looks with shame and horror on her whitening hair, and uses every known means to hide the wrinkles which day by day appear on her face. And Margherita of Savoja was like every other woman when she sees the unfailing signs of age.

Her hair had been her one vanity, the beautiful blonde hair that poets had sung about—it was beginning to turn white. There were many silver threads among the gold, so quite naturally, just as every woman, and not a few men, she had it dyed. To have her hair dyed was a simple matter when in Italy, for in Rome, and near her other residences she had her own regular hairdresser to keep her head as

lovely as artificial means would permit. But when travelling . . .

In those days the Queen Mother was a free citizen, in that she could go practically wherever she pleased without consulting anyone's pleasure. Often she liked to take her car and go off alone with the Countess Pes, daughter of her late lamented lady-in-waiting, Marchesa di Villamarina, and a chauffeur, for a trip about Europe. She always travelled incognito, stopping here and there to visit a quaint village, talking intimately with the natives, even going to local festivities. She enjoyed Germany and the Germans, but France was her favourite country, and Paris the preferred playground. Changing her name did not change her exalted rank, and though she felt herself free to talk to anyone who pleased her, she could not call in any unknown hairdresser attached to the hotel in which she happened to be staying. She could not have a strange man dye, or even wave, the august head.

Countess Pes was officially a lady-in-waiting, acting as companion, and sometimes maid as well when they were travelling, but there were some things she could not do, and hairdressing was one of them.

Her Majesty's chauffeur was a trusty man, who drove a car well, spoke several languages, and he was a good mechanic who handled tools artistically, yet he had never learned to handle a curling iron, or the gentle art of dressing a lady's head.

In those days, even if she had not been vain of her hair, Margherita of Savoia was too young to have white hair, for in Italy a woman could not permit herself to be white until she was at least seventy, so her hair had to be dyed, and carefully dyed by an expert. And when travelling it was not always easy

to find a hairdresser capable of dyeing a Royal head, so as a solution to this difficulty the Queen Mother, it is said, sent her trusty chauffeur to the best hairdresser in Rome, to study dyeing of blonde hair and marcel waving.

When he became sufficiently learned in his new art, they departed, the gracious little Queen, her lady-in-waiting, and her chauffeur, for the "City of Light."

They motored a little each day and after a month reached Paris. Every evening the chauffeur-coiffeur came to Her Majesty's rooms to dress her head for dinner, and every ten days he carefully touched the roots of the once glorious blonde hair.

"If I were a reigning Queen," she said laughingly one day, when he had done her hair particularly well, "I should give you a medal, or at least have you made a Cavalier. But as I am only the Queen Mother, I'm afraid you will have to be contented with my gratitude."

CHAPTER XIV

WAR

ALL the world was at war, at least so it seemed at the beginning of 1915. At Rome, Florence, Turin, Milan, and in many of the smaller cities the one topic of conversation was war, and the question uppermost in the minds of every man and woman was: Would Italy go into the war? If so, on which side? With the Allies naturally, as there were many old grievous questions to settle with Austria, and a world war was a good excuse to settle them once and for all time.

The Crown Prince of Austria-Hungary killed at Serajevo on June 28th, 1914, was a bitter enemy of Italy and a cruel man whose death was not deplored by the Empire over which he should one day have reigned. Bigoted and clerical, he felt an invincible antipathy for the Italian Government, which had, according to his ideas, usurped the temporal power of the Pope. Obstinate and vindictive towards those who did not approve of his plans, he, while having the illusion of preparing new powers and new splendours was, in reality, upsetting the affairs of the Danubian Monarchy with his politics. The regime which he imposed served to dig the pit into which, dying tragically, he dragged with him the future of the Empire.

The country that he hated, the country that might

have been the salvation of Austria-Hungary in its hour of need, turned against the Empire in the hope of wiping out the wrongs and insults that he had heaped upon Italy in the past years, and that his country had been heaping upon the Italians from the beginning of the Savoian dynasty.

From the beginning of 1915 Italy prepared for war. It was said at that time, and truly, that the Italians did not want to fight, for they had only had a little over two years of peace, had scarcely recovered from the war in Libia, were short of men and war materials. They did not want to go to war, but they were forced to defend their honour.

Regardless of what the men felt to be their honourable duty certainly the women were against war, and none more so than the Queen Mother, who had grown up on wars, and better than anyone knew the horrors of them. Yet, when the call to arms came she was ready to answer: Present.

She was sixty-four years old in 1915, she a Princess of Piemonte, Queen of Italy, knew the Italian soul, knew all the political, social, and demographical problems of her land, and of Europe. Being herself, Margherita of Savoia, she understood the necessity for the world war. Granddaughter, daughter, and wife of heroic soldiers, she felt the war, lived it, and was the most tireless sower of courage, and the most devoted of nurses.

Putting her heart in the work, her practical intelligence, with her own hands she created a sort of dreamland, an oasis of peace in her hospital.

For months she had been silently planning and quietly preparing for the fatal day when she must once again see her brave men depart for the front,

from where so few returned. In those days she seemed to be happy enough playing with her grandchildren, chatting with friends, and attending to the usual duties, but the blue eyes were often unnaturally bright as though tears were lurking in their depths, and in conversation she had a tendency to reminiscences of the wars that had been fought during her childhood. She seemed to be worried about the news that came in from the countries at war, terrified by the new instruments of war that were being introduced each day.

"Wars," she said one day, "follow the trend of the times the same as the fashions in clothes. Once they were honest combats between equally brave men, now it seems to be a question, not of the best man winning, but rather of the gun that can shoot the farthest. Once a man on the battle-field had a chance to distinguish himself; now the cannons do all the work and leave him a mere defenceless machine ready to be popped off by another and more powerful machine. Once a king fought at the head of his troops; now he commands on paper; sitting tranquilly in an office he sends forth his men to wholesale slaughter. I think I prefer the old-fashioned method of warfare!"

And yet she almost hoped for war, a new chance for Italy to show her worth to the world. It seemed as though she wanted war, but she did not, rather was it the fear in her heart that made certain words come to her lips.

On May 24th, 1915, Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary, and King Vittorio Emanuele, following the example of his grandfather, assumed command of the Army.

While the armies of Russia, of France, of Germany, and of Great Britain fought in Belgium, in France, in

Galizia, and in Serbia, Italy entered the war to protect her sacred rights, and to put an end to the nation which for years had held nearly all of the peninsula in abhorred slavery.

On May 24th, 1915, Queen Margherita put one of the smaller villas forming a part of the Margherita palace, at the disposition of the Red Cross to be used as a hospital for wounded officers. Also a wing of the palace proper, where the lamented Marchesa di Villamarina once lived, was prepared for soldiers. And of the magnificent garden where she loved to walk about, or to sit in the mild sun of the Roman winters, nothing was reserved for her.

Each room arranged for the wounded had its motto of patriotic cheer, written by the Queen herself, a little thought to brighten the long days of suffering, to guide them on their way, when cured they returned to their homes, or the front. Some of the thirty-one mottoes may sound too flowery when translated into English, but in Italian they are the expressions of a patriotic, religious soul, and as such are a valuable proof of the real character of Margherita of Savoia.

THE QUEEN'S MOTTOES.

1. May the flowers that adorn the smiling country of Italy be carried by the winds from the sapphire seas, from the snowy Alps, and fall in resplendent showers on the heads of our soldiers, bringing them in every leaf the approbation of the Italian hearts.

2. Italy—sacred name, tender name; the strong soldiers, vigilant custodians of our Alps, repeat your name; the daring sailors who defend the sea that is ours, and guard the shores, find strength for the supreme sacrifice in your name.

3. O Patria Nostra, you are worthy of all the love of your sons ; watch over them for your honour and your defence, and be proud of them, because you have just reason to be.

4. The love of country, sacred, beautiful, ardent love, renders happy every sacrifice, makes' every suffering supportable, calms every pain ; happy indeed is the soul completely invaded by this love.

5. O Glorious Patria, all your sons have voluntarily offered themselves to you, in the hope of seeing you beautified by their sacrifices—always remember this, O Patria, and in your heroic history write their names in gold above those already written in their blood.

6. God bless those who, forgetting self, serenely encounter the severest suffering for the Patria.

7. Dangers from terrific storms are presented on every side, but our soldiers look to the star of Italy shining in the sky and remain fearless and serene amidst the raging tempest.

8. O valorous ones, suffering in silence from your cruel wounds, remember that your country admires you because everyone knows that your wounds are the price of our glory.

9. O soldiers of Italy, the light that radiates from your glorious wounds illuminates every Italian heart.

10. Every drop of blood shed for the Patria changes into a precious gem to adorn the victor's crown.

11. The honourable uniform of the Italian soldier not only covers the breast ready for any sacrifice, but also the heart that beats with every generous sentiment.

12. Rest, O heroic defenders of Italy, find in this place a repose from your glorious fatigue, and a new

strength to return to the combat, should the Patria call you again.

13. May the strength of your suffering be a luminous example to the growing youth of Italy.

14. Italy—guard your sons armed for glory, look proudly upon the blood that they have generously shed for your benefit, be thankful for them, because they are dearly beloved sons.

15. Italy is aroused to war, but its soldiers, the best men that Italy has to give, are ever watching the confines of the Patria.

16. With admiration the Italians follow you on the battlefields, watch over you and recognise your worth, see and love in you the expression of the highest virtues of our race.

17. May the thought of duty heroically fulfilled and the tender admiration of Italy lighten your suffering.

18. When you pass by, O generous ones wounded for Italy, everyone will salute. But no salute is grand enough for your valour.

19. O valorous ones who suffer acutely from incurable wounds, rest in the calm of this place, find again the strength that you have sacrificed for the Patria, and for long years to come dedicate it to the glory of Italy.

20. Blessed indeed are the soldiers of Italy! Their serene heroism has made the dream of centuries come true.

21. The flag passes. Salute it, you who have the fortune to see it, and remember that under it are gathered all the heroes who have given the Patria her grandeur.

22. Let the Italian flag fly freely in the wind that everyone may see it, and seeing it say: Thanks, O

valorous brothers, for you have given the beloved flag a new and imperishable glory.

23. When, O valorous ones, the sons of your sons see the marks of your wounds, they will dream of being able to merit the country's gratitude as you have merited it, O heroic defenders of the Patria.

24. The sentiment of duty is the base of every soldier's life, love of the Patria the ideal.

25. Patriotic love united with faith are the strongest aids towards all that is true, good, beautiful, grand.

26. All those who have the good fortune to know the Italy of to-day, to feel the grandeur of the national soul renewed in the heroic acts of our sons, must thank God for the fortune that is theirs.

27. O brilliant sun, lighting the country with golden rays, tell me if you have ever seen anything more resplendent than the heroism of Italy's sons.

28. Immortal honour to the resplendent array of heroes who every hour of the day silently offer their lives to you, O Patria, desiring only your greatness.

29. God's angels carry the prayers of the Italian women for our soldiers to Heaven, and every prayer comes back in blessings upon the Patria.

30. Honour to the soldiers of Italy, Glory and praise to the Patria.

31. The Patria blesses your glorious wounds.

The Queen Margherita hospital, prepared under her supervision, was in every way complete before she permitted it to be occupied by the Red Cross—it was called *Ospedale Territoriale No. 2*, and was the best equipped and most modern hospital for the war-wounded in Italy.

She herself gave each room its name, she herself

placed the Italian flag in the entrance hall between the photographs of her son and daughter-in-law, and with significant delicate modesty, that of King Umberto and herself beneath.

The centre salon of the villa was arranged as a rest and pleasure room for the convalescents.

Decorated in white and gold stucco, it opened on the garden ; a big table, various small tables, wicker arm-chairs, small wicker chairs, reading lamps, and many vases of flowers scattered about. The wide windows were uncurtained so that one could look out on a marvellous hedge of azaleas and dense oaks speckled by the sun.

The garden giving on the Via Boncompagni, where Queen Margherita had given many receptions, was divided in two parts by a line of potted plants, one half for the soldiers, the other half for officers. There for three years wheel-chairs rolled about carrying those who were unable to walk, sometimes pushed by the more fortunate ones ; men on crutches dragged themselves over the paths to comrades stretched on cots, or sitting lazily in the red wicker arm-chairs. Some read the books supplied by the Queen, others played children's games, and not a few learned to knit and do bead work. When allowed to walk or sit in the garden on balmy, sunshiny days, they were usually on the road to recovery and they laughed like children at play.

From every room Margherita had had the handsome tapestries, pictures, lights, and curtains taken down, recovering the walls with white washable paper. To each white bed she tied a large medal with red, white, and green ribbon, on one side of the medal an image of Christ, on the other the Madonna of the Assistance. On the little night table large chrysanthemums

or perfumed roses nodded and smiled on all who entered the room; the red, green, and yellow shades on the reading lamps gave the illusion of other huge and fantastic flowers. Necessary pieces of white furniture, books, newspapers, magazines, boxes of cigars and cigarettes and chocolates made the rooms sympathetic and gay—not at all like the wards in most of the hospitals where officers as well as soldiers were cared for.

By order of the Queen Mother fresh flowers were put in the rooms each day.

The hospital contained 106 beds, of which fifty-three were for officers. There was a section for twenty-five soldiers in the wide hall, in the wing of the Royal villa on the Via St. Basilio side, where the spirit of Margherita's dearest friend still seemed to live, to rejoice in the fact that her once lovely home was being used for the well-being of Italy's brave men. Mass was celebrated every Sunday morning, and attended by those who were able to get to the improvised chapel. There was a dining-room overlooking a bit of garden, and a recreation-room in which there was a gramophone with the newest records, and guitars for those who felt inclined to play and sing.

Often passing through the Via Boncompagni on my way home from work at the Laboratorio Pro Feriti (I lived only a few steps from the Margherita palace), I heard men's voices, and glancing through the wide gate to the garden I would see a group of men, some in stained uniforms, others in the loose hospital coats, some with neatly bandaged heads, or arms in slings, or perhaps bandaged feet resting on a chair; talking, laughing, smoking, and one among them automatically twanging a guitar, and over and above the tranquillity

of the approaching twilight, those voices raised in a plaintive Italian love song. Sometimes I stopped to smile at them, and more than once, like a gentle spirit hovering near the loved ones, I caught a glimpse of a little lady with snow white hair and a white shawl thrown over her shoulders, flitting from one convalescent to another. Though I never heard her words, I knew instinctively how gentle and kind they were.

Every day there were presents of books, magazines, cigarettes, and postal cards, or some personal object that she had heard they wanted.

Never in her already long life had Margherita of Savoia spent a summer in the city, so the greatest sacrifice that she could make for her soldiers, and how absolutely she felt them to be her soldiers, was to remain in Rome during the hot weather, to watch over them as only she could watch, to suffer in their suffering, to comfort them when in pain.

Despite the fact that she was accustomed to the restful freshness of the Alps, never did Margherita leave the capital from the day that war was declared until the closing of her hospital in 1919, except once a year to kneel reverently beside her mother's grave. And then she was only away the time necessary to get to Turin and back.

Every day, and sometimes several times a day, she went to see her *figlioli*, and if any of them were particularly ill, she would sit beside the bed talking cheerfully of the time, when the war over, they would be home with their families. She knew each soldier's name, what his profession was, who was dependent upon him, if married the name of his wife, how many if any children, and what they were called. Very often

she distributed the post, just to see the happy light in their eyes when a longed-for letter was handed to them. She discussed their problems, and to those who needed it, promised help.

The Margherita hospital was a personal offer to the Patria, and every penny of the up-keep was paid by the Queen Mother herself. And as fortunes are reckoned nowadays hers was not a great one, so there were times when she was advised to reduce the heavy expenses, to perhaps cut down on the supply of luxuries.

"Deprive my boys of cigarettes, flowers, or sweets, or even a food delicacy?" she asked indignantly. "Once when a child I asked what was the use in being born a princess if I could not spend money as I wished. I repeat the question now: What is the use of being a Queen Mother, if one cannot spend, if necessary, all one has? 'Yes, even to impoverishing oneself, for those so worthy of comfort and—spoiling. When the war is over I may be poor, but what difference does that make, if I have been able to bring a little light into the lives of those who have lived through so many hours of darkness. . . .? If in the days of my vain youth I was ready to sell my jewels to help the soldiers in Africa, surely now that I am old I can sell one of my villas, and I will gladly rather than deprive one wounded man of a single simple pleasure!"

Whether it rained or was cold, each morning, accompanied by the inseparable companion, Countess Pes, she crossed friskily from her part of the palace to the smaller villa, wrapped in a white shawl, with a grey cape over her shoulders, the hood pulled up over her head.

She never forgot one of her soldiers even after they

went away from the hospital; she recalled their names and many things they had said while under the shelter of her wing. She never forgot the kind word that could bring happiness to a wounded man, never neglected to praise him for what he had done for his country, never for a moment withheld her hand when the touch of it on a fevered brow could help the sufferer to bear his pain. Her hand had been kissed by the greatest men in the world, and it was kissed during the war by the humblest peasant who had gone forth at his country's call to arms.

For officers and soldiers alike she had the soul, the smile, the pity of a tender loving mother when she sees her son recovering from a long and dangerous illness.

While she never did any actual nursing, the personal care she took of her "boys" in the hospital occupied most of her days, yet she still managed to find time to visit other hospitals, and to take an interest in all war work and war workers, as well as to receive important foreign officers who happened to pass through Rome.

In 1915, Marchesa Centurione, lady-in-waiting to Queen Elena, gave the use of her palace for workrooms where hospital supplies were made from materials furnished by the Government. Many Roman ladies worked there from early morning until late in the afternoon, cutting, basting, and sewing on the machine the special bandages then in use. The cutting department where I worked, was in the billiard-room on the first floor, my place close to the lift door. There were three Italian women at sewing machines, and the Signora Bagnani, wife of a General, and myself at the cutting-table.

Nearly every day some distinguished person came to visit the Laboratorio Pro Feriti, as the society was called, but one was usually too busy to pay much attention to visits, no matter how distinguished the visitors were.

One morning there was great excitement in the cutting-room, and though all the women wore white aprons and veils, I noticed that they seemed to be rather fresher and better groomed than usual. I had been absent the afternoon before so was not told that a very special lady was expected that morning. I heard the lift creaking up. It stopped at the first floor, the door opened and a little white haired old lady, a beautiful old lady, stepped out. The Marchesa Centurione and another middle aged woman followed her.

Being at the end of the billiard table and almost at the lift door I was naturally the first to be presented to the little lady. For some reason I felt nervous and excited, and while I distinctly heard my name pronounced by Marchesa Centurione, I missed hers, or thought I did. The old lady said a few pleasant words about our work, thanked me for my share of it, shook hands and passed on. I stood quite still, fascinated by the sweet expression, and merely gave her my hand, but, oh, horrors! all the other women bowed deeply as she approached, and each in turn kissed her hand.

When she finally disappeared into the adjoining room, I asked Signora Bagnani who the dear old lady was.

"The Queen Mother."

"Why didn't you tell me what I was supposed to do, or come around and kick me, or something!" I exclaimed.

"I thought you would know what to do," Signora Bagnani explained. "And I was just about to ask you if you had been told that she was expected when she arrived."

"Of course I didn't know. How could I? One doesn't kiss the hand of the President's wife, and that's as high as we go in America!"

When the little party returned for Her Majesty to go down in the lift I was properly prepared to bow and kiss her hand, and had learned the correct way of addressing a Queen in Italian. Having taken fifteen minutes from my work to practice the *inchino* I performed my bow, I hope gracefully, and stood aside for her to pass in front of me. But she did not pass, she stopped, and in perfect English said: "The Marchesa Centurione tells me you are an American. Are you the wife of the poet de Bowis?"

"No, Your Majesty," I answered, "my husband is an officer, son of (I hesitated to recall what I knew was a tender memory) of—of—perhaps you do not remember him—Professor de Bonis, Your Majesty's late physician."

"Oh!" she smiled a wistful little smile, "I do indeed remember, and with deep affection dear de Bonis. Do we not remember de Bonis?" she turned to her lady-in-waiting, whom I later learned was the Countess Pes. The Countess smiled and nodded. "He was a great man," the Queen resumed, "a fine doctor, one of the finest, and a kind friend. No one knew his qualities better than I did, and I have sincerely mourned him." There were tears in her eyes as she again turned to Countess Pes. "This charming American has married one of de Bonis's sons. Which son?" she smilingly asked me.

"The third."

"Oh, the one with big eyes, who was quite a little boy when his father died? Is he in Rome now? I should like to see him. And are you happy being one of us? Happy to be an Italian working for Italy?"

"Very happy, and very proud, Your Majesty."

"And I hope we are showing our appreciation of you."

The great ladies stood aside while the Queen Mother talked to me about America, about Italy, until I felt as though I had known her intimately for many years. After perhaps fifteen minutes she seemed to realise that she was keeping me from my work, and making the others wait needlessly.

"I am so glad," she said, holding out her hand. As I took it and stooped to kiss it, she laid the other hand over mine in a warm clasp; "to have this opportunity before bidding you good-bye, to say welcome to Italy, daughter of America, and may you always be happy here."

I wanted to thank her for her kindness, to apologise for not bowing or kissing her hand when presented, and to kiss her hand then; but she was still holding mine, so what could I do? I thought of many things to say, but no words came. A soft, firm pressure on my hand, a pressure that had love, hope, understanding in it, a penetrating glance from eyes that were still clear, bright blue, then she was going towards the door.

In the lift she turned and faced me, raised her hand graciously, and said in Italian: "My salutations to your husband."

Then the door closed on Margherita of Savoia—a real Queen.

When an officer was well enough to leave the hospital the Queen received him in private audience. To each she gave a silver cigarette-case with the same inscription as she had in the entrance hall: "Honour to the soldiers of Italy, glory and victory to the Patria." Below: "Souvenir from the Margherita palace," with the date.

To each discharged soldier she gave a wrist watch, a pocket-book, with a sum of money in it, and a *necessaire de toilette*, along with the medal from his bed, that to him had been blessed by the contact with her hands.

If an officer or soldier was dangerously ill, she went to him at any hour of the day or night. If a desire was expressed to see the parents, she herself wrote or dictated the letter or telegram to be sent. And to-day more than one Italian man will say that he owes his life to her loving watchfulness, and to the hope that she kindled in his heart at the moment when a lack of it might have meant death.

In the late summer of 1915, a little soldier of Monza, one of the first arrivals at the hospital, whom the Queen called: "Il piccolo," and for whom she had a genuine affection, was dangerously ill. The poor boy had been literally shot to pieces, and from the beginning his case had been hopeless. Just why he had been sent so far from the front and his home city, no one ever knew, unless it was his fate to be watched over by the Queen, whom he had seen and worshipped when he was a child. During the last days of his atrocious suffering Margherita was constantly near him, never for a minute letting him feel that she knew his hours were numbered. Up to the very end her entrance into the room was greeted with a radiant smile, "celestial smile," she told the doctor, "for already he was

shedding the terrestrial garments and angel's wings were brushing his brow."

He somehow knew that he was going, and his last request was to see " ' la Regina ' and to kiss her hand just once."

"She's been a mother to me," he whispered as an excuse for asking for Her Majesty, "and I guess she'll let me kiss her hand before I go—for in case He don't know, when I get up there I'll tell God what she's done for us poor soldiers!"

When told that "Il piccolo" was asking for her Margherita hurried to his bedside, to smooth the fevered brow already chilled by the cold hand of death. Then, lest he see her tears and understand, she left him with the promise to return in an hour.

The loss of the little soldier touched her deeply. For him, the beloved of all her boys, she had a beautiful wreath made for his coffin, and a tombstone bearing his name, birthplace, and the battlefield on which he was wounded. Returning from the funeral she received the boy's mother, with whom she was closeted for a long time in her private sitting-room.

What the mother of the first soldier of Italy said to the mother of the little soldier who laid down his life for Italy, no one will ever know, for the desolate woman from Monza never told of the conversation between the Royal mother and herself, who because they were both mothers met on equal grounds. Only when she left the Margherita palace it was noticed that her eyes were red, and her face stained with tears, but that there was hope and pride in the sad smile playing about her lips.

Margherita of Savoia in her own sincere sorrow had been able to console the woman who had lost her all,

and in consoling another she had found comfort for herself.

Sometimes there were ceremonies which delighted the Royal hostess as much as they did her wounded men, to whom she herself deigned to award the medals for valour, many of which had been awarded through her efforts. Weather permitting, these ceremonies took place in the garden.

A big arm-chair for the Queen was arranged under the spreading oaks and the protection of the Italian flag. Grouped about her were the Red Cross nurses, the doctors, superior officers commanding the garrison of Rome, the mutilated in their wheel-chairs, others standing, and the families of the wounded men. Usually a General read the list of those to be decorated, then the Queen standing, pinned on the medal with its azure ribbon and gold pin, designed and presented by her, representing the Savoian knot. This done she offered Italian *Spumante*, drinking to her guests, to the Patria ; smiling, motherly, proud of them all.

I have known personally several officers who were cared for at the Margherita hospital, and many nurses who had the honour of being on the staff. All tell the same story of her loving interest in them, of her tireless efforts to make them comfortable, and of her courtesy to the nurses. She knew no moods, no humours, and was the same to all. One day, seeing a young nurse looking tired, she told her to go and rest. That was impossible as there was no one to take her place.

"An hour's rest will do you good, and an hour in this dear boy's room will do me good. I will take your place." And Margherita of Savoja sat down on the

little chair beside the bed. "Have you anything interesting to read?" she asked the young officer.

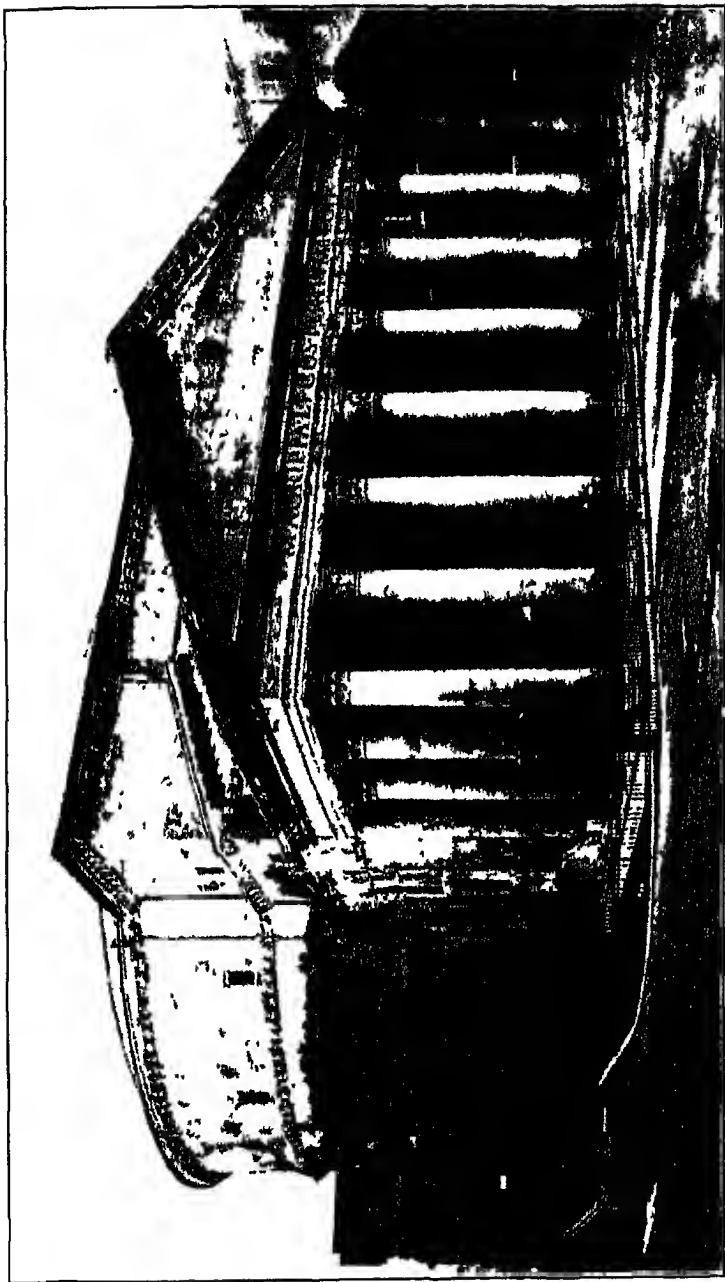
"A new novel, Your Majesty, but it may not be interesting," He handed a book to the Queen.

"Well, we will soon find out." And while the nurse rested for an hour, Queen Margherita sat beside a white bed in a hospital room, and read aloud to a wounded officer, a simple subaltern, hitherto unknown to her.

Her pity for the soldiers was not that of just any woman, it was that of a Queen, Queen Margherita. With her prodigious memory she recalled what the wound was and where he had fallen, the name of his regiment. And after talking with her for a few minutes each and everyone felt an adoration such as the humble feel for the Madonna, felt it a duty to be more and more worthy of the esteem and interest of that woman so high above them, and so humble withal.

Those who returned to the front from Hospital No. 2 were everywhere the most daring and the most valorous. And of a sudden a new wave of tenderness surrounded the regal white head. A new bond of affection joined the people to the throne, and King Vittorio Emanuele, who smiled so rarely when at the front, when happening to hear officers or soldiers speaking of his mother, he smiled complacently, much as he used to smile when a child, and she was all his little world.

During the ups and downs of the Great War, Queen Margherita remained steadfast in her faith in the triumph of justice, and even during the tragic retreat of 1917 she refused to believe that all was over for Italy.



THE PANTHLON AT ROME

Who among the fugitives escaping from their family homes in the provinces of Veneto and Friuli, chased by the Austrian invaders after the retreat of Caporetto, did not feel the piteous thoughts of their beloved Queen, near. Who among the thousands moving like a slow funeral procession in automobiles, farm wagons, on foot over the rough, bare roads towards the nearest railway stations, to be huddled like cattle in the trains that were waiting to take them—they knew not where—to safety, bereft of all possessions save a hand-bag, or a few clothes tied up in a bandanna handkerchief, did not know that though their hearts were breaking with the weight of sorrow and despair, there was a noble heart at Rome that was breaking with theirs.

Her name with that of the King came to their lips after God and their dead—her sweet face, pale, and desolate, appeared before their eyes; pale it was, but the light of faith had not faded from it—and they prayed for her as they prayed for their loved ones at the front.

Those poor fugitives, old men, women and children, had lost all their worldly goods, but in time—with the victory—everything would be restored to them, for SHE, their Queen, had said, and so had King Vittorio Emanuele at the memorable meeting of Peschiera, that Italy would be victorious. Also, Margherita believed in the strength of the Peninsula, in the strength of the women's sacrifices, and in her vast field she was working for success—in the face of defeat preparing for victory.

At last her prayers were answered, her hopes rewarded. The Austrians were being driven back from the new front line, were retreating ignominiously. The

Germans were retiring in the west—the fighting had stopped—or was it a lull?

Then at eleven o'clock in the morning of November 11th, 1918, on the morning of her own son's birthday, the Armistice guns were fired all over the world.

War was over.

In the Margherita palace, from a window overlooking the Via Vittorio Veneto, a tired, pale, but happy lady listened to the last reverberation of the cannon shots. Joy and thanksgiving filled the bright eyes, then suddenly the white head dropped on the folded hands—and Margherita of Savoia wept.

CHAPTER XV

LAST DAYS

REJOICINGS, rejoicings, and more rejoicings! The world was at peace again! The troubles and sorrows of the past four years were soon forgotten by those who had not lost home and dear ones, for peace and life were all about, and the war—well, that was an epoch in the world's history, nothing more.

After the closing of the Margherita hospital, the Queen at last consented to take a rest, to leave Rome for a short time. But, somehow, in the midst of life she could not forget those who had died for the country, and the desire to attend the religious functions and civil ceremonies given in honour of them was more important to her than rest.

She paid a pious visit to the battlefields, looked with horror upon the devastated area of Veneto and Friuli, everywhere encouraging the war invalid and war blind, regally helping orphans and entire bereaved families.

Italian Princess, First Queen of Italy, Margherita of Savoia had to close herself in a heart-breaking and dignified silence when she read in the papers that the officers had been ordered to appear unarmed in public; when she saw that with fraudulent and vile means the victory was being methodically undervalued and even made light of—when she knew that

in the presence of His Majesty, the King, certain men had remained seated and sung the *Bandiera Rossa* at the inauguration of the XXV Congress. d

She sat and waited for events, for the man whose name was in all the daily papers, the daring son of a blacksmith who was forming a defensory party on the other side of the Appenines. She, who so loved her country, who had lived through strife and warfare, but who had always been treated with respect, heard curses on the Royal family, on the King, and even on herself, from those sons of Italy for whom she, and all the Savoians had worked. Rumours reached her of the plot to do away with the House of Savoia, as the Romanoff House had been done away with. Her son, her adored grandson, Queen Elena, and the little granddaughters were all to be killed—while she, being old might be allowed to live in exile.

Women of the people as well as men, the class that had hitherto been gentle and kind, turned against their superiors, and in that country of sunshine and laughter the red flag of the revolutionaries waved.

"Down with the Savoians! Long live the Bolsheviks!" Then the anthem *Giovinezza* sounded on the turbulent air. Fascism was gaining strength. More and more men were joining up. The youth of the country was preparing to defend that country from their revolting brothers, from Bolshevism. Fascism was a force necessary for Italy, and many intelligent men were becoming Fascists from conviction and not for convenience, as has so often been said.

From Gressoney, one of the few safe places during the summers of 1920 and 1921, Margherita anxiously watched the progress of affairs, and it is safe to say that much of her time was spent in prayer. As the

days passed she looked more and with deeper longing towards the strange man at Milan, who seemed always to know what to do and when to do it. And though she said little, her faith in him increased. If the Government was not strong enough to right the wrongs that had grown out of the victory, then some individual must be found to save the monarchy. And that individual, Queen Margherita was convinced, was the son of the blacksmith of Dovia.

Those years between the Armistice and the March on Rome were the most difficult of her later life, inactive in a sense, for so often she was somewhat of a prisoner on her own estates, and not even a tranquil prisoner, as she never knew at what moment a Ministry might fall and the dynasty as well, or her son be assassinated, or the Royal palace burned to the ground.

During those tragic, uncertain days the only sign of nervousness in the outwardly calm woman, was the continual biting of the cuticle around her finger-nails. This was a habit acquired in childhood, to hide her timidity or fear, and she had never been able to overcome it.

At last, on a grey November day, 1922, from over the Appenines, mingling with the Royal March, the glad notes of *Giovinezza* reached Rome.

Then Margherita praised Vittorio Emanuele for not having proclaimed the State under martial law; it is even said that she used her influence to bear on the King when it was believed that he was weakening in his efforts to resist the continual change of governments, and that while the King never permitted her, or anyone to interfere with his plans, for once he listened to her advice to call Mussolini to Rome.

And so the Black Shirts came to Rome, to bring order out of chaos, peace after worse than the horrors of civil war. And Margherita of Savoia praised Benito Mussolini, who brought to the King the Italy of Vittorio Veneto, and who was prepared to reunite the country with the monarchy.

From the beginning the Queen Mother had faith in Mussolini, and a great personal sympathy which she never tried to hide.

Very shortly after the new Fascist Government was functioning, Mussolini was called to a private audience at the Margherita palace. The great affection which existed between the Duce and the Queen Mother dated from the first meeting, when he found her to be a woman of insuperable regality, while she, to her astonishment, found him innately a gentleman. When he came to meet her in the sumptuous salon, she observed him attentively, curious to find some sign of embarrassment regarding the proper Court etiquette. But she was deluded, for the new Chief, and he was very new then, revealed only a proud naturalness of manner and a perfect comportment in the surroundings.

"What eyes," she observed mentally, "what beautiful hands. He might have the blood of kings in his veins. Surely his ancestors were not blacksmiths!" And as they talked, she was more and more charmed by the man who was soon to put the world under his spell.

On his fortieth birthday she sent him this affectionate telegram :

"To-day I want my best wishes to reach you who give all of yourself for the good and the grandeur of our country."

During the illness that later forced the Duce to rest from his arduous duties, Queen Margherita sent

continually to ask news of his condition, and to wish him well.

Despite the worry and fatigue of the past five years that had aged her considerably, she still travelled, still visited assiduously the various institutions, showing how sincerely she had taken to heart the welfare of the boys and girls of the people, how much she wanted them to grow up to be brave and laborious citizens. She attended regularly the symphonic concerts at the Augusteo, the art expositions and the most notable lectures. She had a real cult for Dante, whose works she had studied with passion as a girl, re-studied with her intelligent son, re-read and meditated on during the mature years.

Regretting that Rome did not have a Dante centre, she took up the work with one of the preferred friends of her childhood, Natalia della Rocca, then Countess Francesetti di Malgra, the President of a flourishing institute for feminine culture. Under the patronage of Queen Margherita the Countess set seriously to the organisation of a cultural society; and thus the friendship of two Piemontese girls was cemented at Rome in the name of Dante. Margherita of Savoia was honorary President of the Society which met in the Palazzetto degli Anguillara, Piazza Sonnino, later known as the "Casadi Dante."

In 1924, Margherita went to Turin to take part in a ceremony given in honour of the "Pensioned Veterans," an institute founded by the great philanthropist and patriot, Riccardo di Angelis. A flag presented by Her Majesty, the Queen Mother, was to be consigned that evening, and was the real reason for the impressive event.

Several hundred men were gathered in the large

hall when the Queen entered with that truly regal walk that had been so admired wherever she went, a smile on her lips. Trembling with joy and pride the veterans, who came from every province in Italy, saluted their Queen. They were all old men who had fought in several wars, men who had known her in her glory when she was the toast of every regiment, when she was the reigning Queen, and she was still THEIR Queen.

The vast hall, as she looked about over the heads of those bowing veterans, seemed like a garden of red carnations, filled as it was with the red shirts of the *Garibaldini*. There were others, it is true, in the old azure uniforms of the kingdom of Piemonte-Sardo, and there were five, all over ninety, who had on the uniform of the Crimea.

One by one, a slow procession, those strangely attired men marched by the Queen, who had a smile for each, an affectionate word for many whom she had known in the past. Then came a little old man in torn azure uniform with gold lacings and high *kept*, carrying suspended from his neck a huge drum, on which from time to time he played a few pathetic martial notes.

Suddenly, watching and listening to him Margherita saw herself again a little girl in her father's arms, looking at the soldiers drilling in the Square before the Chiabrese palace. All her life came back in kaleidoscopic pictures, all the sorrow, all the joys seemed to be in that old drum played falteringly by the Sardinian drummer, the last drummer of Sardegna, the last souvenir of the long ago past. He played the "reveille" on the drum that had belonged to the defunct drummer Dominico Toscanini, a Genovese who had been with

the valorous soldiers of the *quadrato* (quadrangle) at Villafranca. Before that valiant memory of other days the then young Prince Umberto, who was standing proudly beside his grandmother, humbly bowed his head. And Margherita, last of the Savoians of her generation, drew the little old drummer to her in a trembling embrace, while tears veiled the sweet, tired eyes.

She followed with passion, with interest, with sympathy the reconstruction work of the Fascists, and in her heart united those who had fallen in the war with those who had died for the Fascist cause. At the solemn Mass in honour of the heroes at St. Croce, at Florence, in 1925, she asked to have the mothers of both soldiers and Fascists present—and for each mother she had a word of understanding.

When in the spring of the same year it was arranged at Rovoreto to recall to the Italians, with the tolling of church bells, the grand sacrifice of the dead, Margherita took the initiative under her patronage, writing a touching prayer to be engraved on a bronze slab placed in the Cathedral :

“ O Father receive into the light of Thy Presence the heroic souls of those who have given up their lives for the honour and glory of the country ; and may the tolling of these bells mingle with the prayers that rise to Thee from this world of martyrs and heroes and those that come down from Heaven, in a unique invocation to Thee, O Father, for the future grandeur of Italy.”

But one must not think that the Queen's days were

given entirely to patriotic and charitable works, for she still had many interests, still had many friends who came to see her, to brighten the hours, no matter in which of her villas she happened to be stopping.

Never a heavy eater, nor fond of the delicacies of other kitchens, she still often longed for Piemontese cooking, and perhaps many of her visits to Turin, and Gressoney were more thoroughly enjoyed—because the special dishes of the provinces were offered her. And in the season of truffles she seemed to find a new pleasure in her meals.

She still cared about clothes, not for herself, for her wardrobe had become that of any serious old lady, but for those who were near her, and particularly Queen Elena, for a Queen, she believed, should be the most perfectly dressed woman in the land, a model for all other women to follow.

Queen Elena, Margherita understood, was about to buy a new fur coat, and the best furriers in Rome were invited to bring their model coats to the Quirinale for Her Majesty's inspection. Among a number of handsome coats being shown, there was a beautiful sealskin, which Queen Elena liked, but found too expensive. As she was about to decide on a more modest coat, the Queen Mother was announced. Queen Elena was somewhat annoyed as she knew well her mother-in-law's extravagant taste.

"What are you doing, Elena?" The Queen Mother asked with interest. "Buying a new fur coat? That is a good idea. Which have you selected?" She looked at the handsome display.

"Well," Queen Elena hesitated, "I prefer the sealskin," she indicated the dark soft fur coat spread out temptingly on a chair, "but I think that it is too

expensive, so I will take this one, which looks almost as well and costs much less."

"Too expensive!" Margherita of Savoia exclaimed indignantly. "Nothing is too expensive for the Queen of Italy."

"But, Mamma——" Queen Elena protested.

"Nothing is too good for the Queen of Italy!" came the quick retort. "If the coat you like is too expensive, I will make you a present of it!" Then turning to the furrier with a regal gesture: "Take Her Majesty's measurements, if you please, she will have the sealskin coat. And kindly put it on my personal account."

Before Queen Elena had recovered from her surprise sufficiently to thank her mother-in-law for the generous gift, Queen Margherita had swept out of the room.

With her hair as white as the snow of her beloved Alps, the sweet face a little tired, shoulders bent with the weight of years, but with the eyes still bright and the smile of twenty, adored by all she passed among her people: La Regina. And while Italy was feasting the twenty-fifth year of her son's reign, and an always stronger bond united Italy to the Sovereigns, everyone clung to her with the same love and faith that they teach their children the Lord's Prayer.

The Queen Mother left the palace that she was never to see again on July 29th, 1925, and the same evening the flag on the roof, indicating her presence in the Villa of the Ludovisi was lowered. The windows of the corner room where she loved to sit, because from there she could see the wide tree-lined Via Vittorio Veneto, so like the Corsos of her Turin, were closed.

The flag was put away, never more to fly in the breeze

that blows from the sea, while another at half-mast draped in crêpe was soon to hang from the main balcony of the empty palace.

After short sojourns at various villas, in September Margherita went to Bordighera, to the villa that she called her "terrestrial paradise."

In November, 1925, when a nefarious attempt was made on Mussolini's life, which in striking down the Duce would have struck Italy as well, Margherita telegraphed :

"From the bottom of my heart I thank God for preserving Italy from disaster in protecting the precious life of Your Excellency,

Very Affectionately,

COUSIN MARGHERITA.

Then only a short time before her death, she observed to Lucino Cappelli, the publisher, that Mussolini, besides being a grand man, was also a handsome man. "What a pity," she said, "that so many photographs spoil him and make him so ugly."

On November 20th, her 74th birthday was celebrated all over Italy. Smiling and happy she appeared in Bordighera on Prince Umberto's arm. Umberto, the young grandson who was never so contented as when spending a few days with his "precious little *nonna*," was there celebrating her birthday with her.

On December 20th the Italians as one heart united by one love turned out in holiday attire, wearing the symbolic daisy in their buttonholes. For that day SHE had promised to return to Rome.

But three weeks before she had been asked to inaugurate the seat of the Fascist corporation at San

Remo, and despite the inclement weather she insisted upon taking the trip to the nearby city. She took cold, paid no attention to the slight illness until a few days later the doctors put her to bed, and announced the disease to be bronchial pneumonia.

More than ever, for she had never been seriously ill in her life, Italy showed love for her. Italy knew that she was ill, and that she was old. Bulletins came in regularly, always more alarming. Then all Italy knelt and raised supplicating hands to God to save their Queen; the white-haired, venerated Pope, whom she had known as Archbishop of Milan, prayed for her. Their Majesties and the Princes of Savoia prayed in the Royal chapel of the Sudario, the Crown Prince prayed in the Cathedral of the Consolata; in the great and small churches, her people prayed for her.

It seemed that their prayers to have her just a little longer with them were answered, for she passed the crisis, entered into convalescence. She was able to embrace the King and Queen who came from Rome to wish her a Happy New Year; to smile upon her handsome grandson, in whom she saw the best of the House revived. On January 1st she was well enough to thank the doctors and her two faithful friends, Countess Pes and Count di Cassillo, who had attended her with filial affection. She was able to send telegrams of thanks to the Governor of Rome and to Benito Mussolini—could still show pleasure in receiving the flowers that came from every part of Italy.

She believed, and all the others believed, that her life had been saved.

During the night of January 2nd she felt suddenly that something inside had broken—irrevocably. Withal she still had strength for the Last Communion, perhaps

to see before her the face of her God, whom she had so devoutly worshipped. She still had time to send a loving thought to her son, to her grand-children, to Italy.

With only a slight tremor of the frail body she lost consciousness.

Unconscious, paralysed, not suffering, the God of her faith permitted her children to kiss her once more, the Patria to kneel in adoration and farewell.

At eleven o'clock on Monday, January 4th, 1926, with the warm winter sun shining on the closed windows of her room, the soul that had done so much good in the world, the soul that had made so many people happy, unseen by those who were lovingly, patiently watching, took flight.

Queen Elena, who had sat beside her bed all night, went down to the garden to gather a bunch of HER roses with which to cover her; the Sisters dressed her in black, on her head the white scarf that she had worn on the happy November 20th. And in her hands they placed the crucifix.

A sweet smile still lingered on the white, white face, the smile of one who had carried blessings through life and who, the mission of living fulfilled—slept. . . . Because as she once said: "To die is not the terrible thing, it is to have lived uselessly, to go to God empty handed; not to be mourned."

In the midst of a chorus of sobs the King, pale, crushed, reverently knelt—there beside his dead to live again his past life, to see again the sweet and loving mother.

News of her death spread in a flash, passed the frontiers and the sea. Wherever there was an Italian

heart, there, there were tears and sorrow. As a mother she was mourned by all.

The silver-coloured casket was taken to the railway station, placed in a crêpe-draped car filled with flowers. The train stopped for a minute at every station from Bordighera to Rome, and in every station, as when a bride she passed triumphantly through Italy, there were hundreds waiting with flowers, but instead of the smiles that greeted her over fifty years before, there were tears for the first Queen.

In the millennial shade of the Pantheon—where from the large open dome the sun shines and the rain beats, in the Pantheon where the nearby streets are paved with wood to create a silence around the last sleep of Kings, beside her adored husband and King, the first Queen of Italy rests—eternally.

She rests, the beloved Queen, under the solemn monument of marble and amethyst, that she and her son erected to Umberto "Il Buono," watched over by millions of hearts—guide and light of Italy, after having been the smile and the love.

Other Queens will grace the throne of Italy, other Queens will wear the Royal diadem; but to the Italians of all time Margherita of Savoia must remain: La Regina.

THE END.

